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THE

WORKS

OF THE REVEREND

GEORGE WHITEFIELD, M.A.

Late of PEMBROKE-COLLEGE, OXFORD,

And Chaplain to the Rt. Hon. the Counteſs of HUNTINGDON.

CONTAINING

All his SERMONS and TRACTS

Which have been already publiſhed:

WITH

A SELECT COLLECTION of LETTERS,

Written to his moſt intimate Friends, and Perſons of Diſtinction, in *England*, *Scotland*, *Ireland*, and *America*, from the Year 1734, to 1770, including the whole Period of his Miniſtry.

ALSO

Some other PIECES on IMPORTANT SUBJECTS, never before printed; prepared by Himſelf for the Preſs.

To which is prefixed,

An ACCOUNT of his LIFE,

Compiled from his Original PAPERS and LETTERS.

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SERMON

SERMON I.

The Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent.

GENESIS iii. 15.

And I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed; it ſhall bruiſe thy Head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his Heel.

ON reading to you theſe words, I may addreſs you in the language of the holy angels to the ſhepherds, that were watching their flocks by night; "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy." For this is the firſt promiſe that was made of a Saviour to the apoſtate race of *Adam*. We generally look for CHRIST only in the New Teſtament; but chriſtianity, in one ſenſe, is very near as old as the creation. It is wonderful to obſerve how gradually GOD revealed his Son to mankind. He began with the promiſe in the text, and this the elect lived upon, till the time of *Abraham*. To him, GOD made further diſcoveries of his eternal council concerning man's redemption. Afterwards, at ſundry times, and in divers manners, GOD ſpoke to the fathers by the prophets, till at length the LORD JESUS himſelf was manifeſted in fleſh, and came and tabernacled amongſt us.

This firſt promiſe muſt certainly be but dark to our firſt parents, in compariſon of that great light which we enjoy: And yet, dark as it was, we may aſſure ourſelves they built upon it their hopes of everlaſting ſalvation, and by that faith were ſaved.

How they came to ſtand in need of this promiſe, and what is the extent and meaning of it, I intend, GOD willing, to make the ſubject-matter of your preſent meditation.

The fall of man is written in too legible characters not to be underſtood: Thoſe that deny it, by their denying, prove it. The very heathens confeſſed, and bewailed it: They could ſee the ſtreams of corruption running through the whole race of mankind, but could not trace them to the fountain-head. Before GOD gave a revelation of his Son, man was a riddle to himſelf. And *Moſes* unfolds more, in this one chapter (out of which the text is taken) than all mankind could have been capable of finding out of themſelves, though they had ſtudied to all eternity.

In the preceding chapter he had given us a full account, how GOD ſpoke the world into being; and eſpecially how he formed man of the duſt of the earth, and breathed into him the breath of life, ſo that he became a living ſoul. A council of the Trinity was called concerning the formation of this lovely creature. The reſult of that council was, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeneſs. So GOD created man in his own image, in the image of GOD created he him." *Moſes* remarkably repeats theſe words, that we might take particular notice of our divine Original. Never was ſo much expreſſed in ſo few words: None but a man inſpired could have done ſo. But it is remarkable, that though *Moſes* mentions our being made in the image of GOD, yet he mentions it but twice, and that in a tranſient manner; as though he would have ſaid, "man was made in honour, GOD made "him upright, 'in the image of GOD, male and female "created he them.' But man ſo ſoon fell, and became like "the beaſts that periſh, nay, like the devil himſelf, that it is "ſcarce worth mentioning."

How ſoon man fell after he was created, is not told us; and therefore, to fix any time, is to be wiſe above what is written. And, I think, they who ſuppoſe that man fell the

ſame

ſame day in which he was made, have no ſufficient ground for their opinion. The many things which are crouded together in the former chapter, ſuch as the formation of *Adam*'s wife, his giving names to the beaſts, and his being put into the garden which GOD had planted, I think require a longer ſpace of time than a day to be tranſacted in. However, all agree in this, "man ſtood not long." How long, or how ſhort a while, I will not take upon me to determine. It more concerns us to enquire, how he came to fall from his ſtedfaſtneſs, and what was the riſe and progreſs of the temptation which prevailed over him. The account given us in this chapter concerning it, is very full; and it may do us much ſervice, under GOD, to make ſome remarks upon it.

"Now the ſerpent (ſays the ſacred hiſtorian) was more ſubtile than any beaſt of the field which the LORD GOD had made; and he ſaid unto the woman, Yea, hath GOD ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

Though this was a real ſerpent, yet he that ſpoke was no other than the devil; from hence, perhaps, called the old ſerpent, becauſe he took poſſeſſion of the ſerpent when he came to beguile our firſt parents. The devil envied the happineſs of man, who was made, as ſome think, to ſupply the place of the fallen angels. GOD made man upright, and with full power to ſtand if he would: He was juſt, therefore, in ſuffering him to be tempted. If he fell, he had no one to blame except himſelf. But how muſt ſatan effect his fall? He cannot do it by his power, he attempts it therefore by policy: he takes poſſeſſion of a ſerpent, which was more ſubtile than all the beaſts of the field, which the LORD GOD had made; ſo that men who are full of ſubtilty, but have no piety, are only machines for the devil to work upon, juſt as he pleaſes.

"And he ſaid unto the woman." Here is an inſtance of his ſubtilty. He ſays unto the woman, the weaker veſſel, and when ſhe was alone from her huſband, and therefore was more liable to be overcome; "Yea, hath GOD ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Theſe words are certainly ſpoken in anſwer to ſomething which the devil either ſaw or heard. In all probability, the woman was now near the tree of knowledge of good and evil; (for we ſhall find

her, by and by, plucking an apple from it) perhaps ſhe might be looking at, and wondering what there was in that tree more than the others, that ſhe and her huſband ſhould be forbidden to taſte of it. Satan ſeeing this, and coveting to draw her into a parley with him, (for if the devil can perſuade us not to reſiſt, but to commune with him, he hath gained a great point) he ſays, "Yea, hath GOD ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of every tree in the garden?" The firſt thing he does is to perſuade her, if poſſible, to entertain hard thoughts of GOD; this is his general way of dealing with GOD's children: "Yea, hath GOD ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of every tree of the "garden? What! hath GOD planted a garden, and placed "you in the midſt of it, only to teaze and perplex you? hath "he planted a garden, and yet forbid you making uſe of any "of the fruits of it at all?" It was impoſſible for him to aſk a more inſnaring queſtion, in order to gain his end: For *Eve* was here ſeemingly obliged to anſwer, and vindicate GOD's goodneſs. And therefore,—

Verſe 2, 3. The woman ſaid unto the ſerpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midſt of the garden, GOD hath ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of it, neither ſhall ye touch it, leſt ye die."

The former part of the anſwer was good, "We may eat "of the fruit of the trees of the garden, GOD has not forbid "us eating of every tree of the garden. No; we may eat "of the fruit of the trees in the garden (and, it ſhould ſeem, "even of the tree of life, which was as a ſacrament to man "in a ſtate of innocence) there is only one tree in the midſt "of the garden, of which GOD hath ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of "it, neither ſhall ye touch it, leſt ye die." Here ſhe begins to warp, and ſin begins to conceive in her heart. Already ſhe has contracted ſome of the ſerpent's poiſon, by talking with him, which ſhe ought not to have done at all. For ſhe might eaſily ſuppoſe, that it could be no good being, that could put ſuch a queſtion unto her, and inſinuate ſuch diſhonourable thoughts of GOD. She ſhould therefore have fled from him, and not ſtood to have parleyed with him at all. Immediately the ill effects of it appear, ſhe begins to ſoften the divine threatning. GOD had ſaid, "the day thou eateſt thereof, *thou ſhalt ſurely die*;" or, dying thou ſhalt die. But *Eve*

Eve ſays, " Ye ſhall not eat of it, neither ſhall ye touch it, *leſt ye die.*" We may be aſſured we are fallen into, and begin to fall by temptation, when we begin to think GOD will not be as good as his word, in reſpect to the execution of his threatnings denounced againſt ſin. Satan knew this, and therefore artfully

" Said unto the woman, (ver. 4.) Ye ſhall not ſurely die," in an inſinuating manner, " Ye ſhall not ſurely die. Surely, " GOD will not be ſo cruel as to damn you only for eating " an apple, it cannot be." Alas! how many does Satan lead captive at his will, by flattering them, that they ſhall not ſurely die; that hell-torments will not be eternal; that GOD is all mercy; that he therefore will not puniſh a few years ſin with an eternity of miſery? But *Eve* found GOD as good as his word; and ſo will all they who go on in ſin, under a falſe hope that they ſhall not ſurely die.

We may alſo underſtand the words ſpoken poſitively, and this is agreeable to what follows; You ſhall not ſurely die; " It is all a deluſion, a mere bugbear, to keep you in a ſervile " ſubjection."

For (ver. 5.) " GOD doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then ſhall your eyes be opened, and ye ſhall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

What child of GOD can expect to eſcape ſlander, when GOD himſelf was thus ſlandered even in paradiſe? Surely the underſtanding of *Eve* muſt have been, in ſome meaſure, blinded, or ſhe would not have ſuffered the tempter to ſpeak ſuch perverſe things. In what odious colours is GOD here repreſented! " GOD doth know, that in the day ye eat there- " of, ye ſhall be as gods," (equal with GOD.) So that the grand temptation was, that they ſhould be hereafter under no controul, equal, if not ſuperior, to GOD that made them, knowing good and evil. *Eve* could not tell what Satan meant by this; but, to be ſure, ſhe underſtood it of ſome great privilege which they were to enjoy. And thus Satan now points out a way which ſeems right to ſinners, but does not tell them the end of that way is death.

To give ſtrength and force to this temptation, in all probability, Satan, or the ſerpent, at this time plucked an apple from the tree, and ate it before *Eve*; by which *Eve* might

be induced to think, that the ſagacity and power of ſpeech, which the ſerpent had above the other beaſts, muſt be owing, in a great meaſure, to his eating that fruit; and, therefore, if he received ſo much improvement, ſhe might alſo expect a like benefit from it. All this, I think, is clear; for, otherwiſe, I do not ſee with what propriety it could be ſaid, "When the woman ſaw that it was good for food." How could ſhe know it was good for food, unleſs ſhe had ſeen the ſerpent feed upon it?

Satan now begins to get ground apace. Luſt had conceived in *Eve*'s heart; ſhortly it will bring forth ſin. Sin being conceived, brings forth death. Verſe 6. "And when the woman ſaw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleaſant to the eyes, and a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe, ſhe took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave alſo unto her huſband, and he did eat."

Our ſenſes are the landing ports of our ſpiritual enemies. How needful is that reſolution of holy *Job*, "I have made a covenant with mine eyes!" When *Eve* began to gaze on the forbidden fruit with her eyes, ſhe ſoon began to long after it with her heart. When ſhe ſaw that it was good for food, and pleaſant to the eyes, (here was the luſt of the fleſh, and luſt of the eye) but, above all, a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe, wiſer than GOD would have her be, nay, as wiſe as GOD himſelf; ſhe took of the fruit thereof, and gave alſo unto her huſband with her, and he did eat. As ſoon as ever ſhe ſinned herſelf, ſhe turned tempter to her huſband. It is dreadful, when thoſe, who ſhould be help-meets for each other in the great work of their ſalvation, are only promoters of each other's damnation: but thus it is. If we ourſelves are good, we ſhall excite others to goodneſs; if we do evil, we ſhall entice others to do evil alſo. There is a cloſe connection between doing and teaching. How needful then is it for us all to take heed that we do not ſin any way ourſelves, leſt we ſhould become factors for the devil, and inſnare, perhaps, our neareſt and deareſt relatives? "ſhe gave alſo unto her huſband with her, and he did eat."

Alas! what a complication of crimes was there in this one ſingle act of ſin! Here is an utter diſbelief of GOD's threatning; the utmoſt ingratitude to their Maker, who had ſo lately

lately planted this garden, and placed them in it, with ſuch a glorious and comprehenſive charter. And, the utmoſt neglect of their poſterity, who they knew were to ſtand or fall with them. Here was the utmoſt pride of heart: they wanted to be equal with GOD. Here's the utmoſt contempt put upon his threatning and his law: the devil is credited and obeyed before him, and all this only to ſatisfy their ſenſual appetite. Never was a crime of ſuch a complicated nature committed by any here below: Nothing but the devil's apoſtaſy and rebellion could equal it.

And what are the conſequences of their diſobedience? Are their eyes opened? Yes, their eyes are opened; but, alas! it is only to ſee their own nakedneſs. For we are told (ver. 7.) "That the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." Naked of GOD, naked of every thing that was holy and good, and deſtitute of the divine image, which they before enjoyed. They might rightly now be termed *Ichabod*; for the glory of the LORD departed from them. O how low did theſe ſons of the morning then fall! out of GOD, into themſelves; from being partakers of the divine nature, into the nature of the devil and the beaſt. Well, therefore, might they know that they were naked, not only in body, but in ſoul.

And how do they behave now they are naked? Do they flee to GOD for pardon? Do they ſeek to GOD for a robe to cover their nakedneſs? No, they were now dead to GOD, and became earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh: therefore, inſtead of applying to GOD for mercy, "they ſewed or platted fig-leaves together, and made themſelves aprons," or things to gird about them. This is a lively repreſentation of all natural men: we ſee that we are naked: we, in ſome meaſure, confeſs it; but, inſtead of looking up to GOD for ſuccour, we patch up a righteouſneſs of our own (as our firſt-parents platted fig-leaves together) hoping to cover our nakedneſs by that. But our righteouſneſs will not ſtand the ſeverity of GOD's judgment: it will do us no more ſervice than the fig-leaves did *Adam* and *Eve*, that is, none at all.

For (ver. 8.) "They heard the voice of the LORD GOD walking in the trees of the garden, in the cool of the day; and *Adam* and his wife (notwithſtanding their fig-leaves)

hid themſelves from the preſence of the LORD GOD, among the trees of the garden."

They heard the voice of the LORD GOD, or the Word of the LORD GOD, even the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who is "the word that was with GOD, and the word that was GOD." They heard him walking in the trees of the garden, in the cool of the day. A ſeaſon, perhaps, when *Adam* and *Eve* uſed to go, in an eſpecial manner, and offer up an evening-ſacrifice of praiſe and thankſgiving. The cool of the day. Perhaps the ſin was committed early in the morning, or at noon; but GOD would not come upon them immediately, he ſtaid till the cool of the day. And if we would effectually reprove others, we ſhould not do it when they are warmed with paſſion, but wait till the cool of the day.

But what an alteration is here! Inſtead of rejoicing at the voice of their beloved, inſtead of meeting him with open arms and inlarged hearts, as before, they now hide themſelves in the trees of the garden. Alas, what a fooliſh attempt was this? Surely they muſt be naked, otherwiſe how could they think of hiding themſelves from GOD? Whither could they flee from his preſence? But, by their fall, they had contracted an enmity againſt GOD: they now hated, and were afraid to converſe with GOD their Maker. And is not this our caſe by nature? Aſſuredly it is. We labour to cover our nakedneſs with the fig-leaves of our own righteouſneſs: We hide ourſelves from GOD as long as we can, and will not come, and never ſhould come, did not the Father prevent, draw, and ſweetly conſtrain us by his grace, as he here prevented *Adam*.

Verſe 9. "And the LORD GOD called unto *Adam*, and ſaid unto him, *Adam*, where art thou?"

"The LORD GOD called unto *Adam*," (for otherwiſe *Adam* would never have called unto the LORD GOD) and ſaid, "*Adam*, where art thou? How is it that thou comeſt "not to pay thy devotions as uſual?" Chriſtians, remember the LORD keeps an account when you fail coming to worſhip. Whenever therefore you are tempted to withhold your attendance, let each of you fancy you heard the LORD GOD calling unto you, and ſaying, "O man, O woman, where art thou? It may be underſtood in another and better ſenſe;

"*Adam*,

"*Adam*, where art thou?" What a condition is thy poor ſoul in? This is the firſt thing the LORD aſks and convinces a ſinner of; when he prevents and calls him effectually by his grace; he alſo calls him by name; for unleſs GOD ſpeaks to us in particular, and we know where we are, how poor, how miſerable, how blind, how naked, we ſhall never value the redemption wrought out for us by the death and obedience of the dear LORD JESUS. "*Adam*, where art thou?"

Verſe 10. "And he ſaid, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid." See what cowards ſin makes us. If we knew no ſin, we ſhould know no fear. "Becauſe I was naked, and I hid myſelf." Ver. 11. "And he ſaid, who told thee that thou waſt naked? Haſt thou eaten of the tree, whereof I (thy Maker and Law-giver) commanded thee, that thou ſhouldſt not eat?"

GOD knew very well that *Adam* was naked, and that he had eaten of the forbidden fruit. But GOD would know it from *Adam*'s own mouth. Thus GOD knows all our neceſſities before we aſk, but yet inſiſts upon our aſking for his grace, and confeſſing our ſins. For, by ſuch acts, we acknowledge our dependence upon GOD, take ſhame to ourſelves, and thereby give glory to his great name.

Verſe 12. "And the man ſaid, the woman which thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

Never was nature more lively delineated. See what pride *Adam* contracted by the fall! How unwilling he is to lay the blame upon, or take ſhame to himſelf. This anſwer is full of inſolence towards GOD, enmity againſt his wife, and diſingenuity in reſpect to himſelf. For herein he tacitly reflects upon GOD. "The woman that *thou* gaveſt to be with me." As much as to ſay, if *thou* hadſt not given me *that woman*, I had not eaten the forbidden fruit. Thus, when men ſin, they lay the fault upon their paſſions; then blame and reflect upon GOD for giving them thoſe paſſions. Their language is, "the appetites that thou gaveſt us, they deceived us; and "therefore we ſinned againſt thee." But, as GOD, notwithſtanding, puniſhed *Adam* for hearkning to the voice of his wife, ſo he will puniſh thoſe who hearken to the dictates of their corrupt inclinations: For GOD compels no man to ſin.

Adam

Adam might have withſtood the ſolicitations of his wife, if he would. And ſo, if we look up to GOD, we ſhould find grace to help in the time of need. The devil and our own hearts tempt, but they cannot force us to conſent, without the concurrence of our own wills. So that our damnation is of ourſelves, as it will evidently appear at the great day, notwithſtanding all mens preſent impudent replies againſt GOD. As *Adam* ſpeaks inſolently in reſpect to GOD, ſo he ſpeaks with enmity againſt his wife; the woman, or this woman, ſhe gave me. He lays all the fault upon her, and ſpeaks of her with much contempt. He does not ſay, my wife, my dear wife; but, *this woman*. Sin diſunites the moſt united hearts: it is the bane of holy fellowſhip. Thoſe who have been companions in ſin here, if they die without repentance, will both hate and condemn one another hereafter. All damned ſouls are accuſers of their brethren. Thus it is, in ſome degree, on this ſide the grave. "The woman whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the tree, and I did eat." What a diſingenuous ſpeech was here! He makes uſe of no leſs than fifteen words to excuſe himſelf, and but one or two (in the original) to confeſs his fault, if it may be called a confeſſion at all. "The woman which thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the tree;" here are fifteen words; "and I did eat." With what reluctance do theſe laſt words come out? How ſoon are they uttered? "And I did eat." But thus it is with an unhumbled, unregenerate heart: It will be laying the fault upon the deareſt friend in the world, nay, upon GOD himſelf, rather than take ſhame to itſelf. This pride we are all ſubject to by the fall; and, till our hearts are broken, and made contrite by the ſpirit of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, we ſhall be always charging GOD fooliſhly. "Againſt thee, and thee only, have I ſinned, that thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſaying, and clear when thou art judged," is the language of none but thoſe, who, like *David*, are willing to confeſs their faults, and are truly ſorry for their ſins. This was not the caſe of *Adam:* his heart was not broken; and therefore he lays the fault of his diſobedience upon his wife and GOD, and not upon himſelf; "The woman which thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

Verſe

Verſe 13. "And the LORD GOD ſaid, What is this that thou haſt done?" What a wonderful concern does GOD expreſs in this expoſtulation! "What a deluge of miſery haſt "thou brought upon thyſelf, thy huſband, and thy poſterity? "What is this that thou haſt done? Diſobeyed thy GOD, "obeyed the devil, and ruined thy huſband, for whom I "made thee to be an help-meet! What is this that thou haſt "done?" GOD would here awaken her to a ſenſe of her crime and danger, and therefore, as it were, thunders in her ears: for the law muſt be preached to ſelf-righteous ſinners. We muſt take care of healing before we ſee ſinners wounded, leſt we ſhould ſay, Peace, peace, where there is no peace. Secure ſinners muſt hear the thunderings of mount *Sinai*, before we bring them to mount *Sion*. They who never preach up the law, it is to be feared, are unſkilful in delivering the glad tidings of the goſpel. Every miniſter ſhould be a *Boanerges*, a ſon of thunder, as well as a *Barnabas*, a ſon of conſolation. There was an earthquake and a whirlwind, before the ſmall ſtill voice came to *Elijah*: We muſt firſt ſhew people they are condemned, and then ſhew them how they muſt be ſaved. But how and when to preach the law, and when to apply the promiſes of the goſpel, wiſdom is profitable to direct. "And the LORD GOD ſaid unto the woman, What is this that thou haſt done?"

"And the woman ſaid, The ſerpent beguiled me, and I did eat." She does not make uſe of ſo many words to excuſe herſelf, as her huſband; but her heart is as unhumbled as his. What is this, ſays GOD, that thou haſt done? GOD here charges her with doing it. She dares not deny the fact, or ſay, I have not done it; but ſhe takes all the blame off herſelf, and lays it upon the ſerpent; "The ſerpent beguiled me, and I did eat." She does not ſay, "LORD, I was to "blame for talking with the ſerpent; LORD, I did wrong, "in not haſtening to my huſband, when he put the firſt queſ-"tion to me; LORD, I plead guilty, I only am to blame, O "let not my poor huſband ſuffer for my wickedneſs!" This would have been the language of her heart, had ſhe now been a true penitent. But both were now alike proud; therefore neither will lay the blame upon themſelves: "The ſerpent beguiled me, and I did eat. The woman which thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

I have

I have been the more particular in remarking this part of their behaviour, becauſe it tends ſo much to the magnifying of Free-grace, and plainly ſhews us, that ſalvation cometh only from the LORD. Let us take a ſhort view of the miſerable circumſtances our firſt parents were now in: They were legally and ſpiritually dead, children of wrath, and heirs of hell. They had eaten the fruit, of which GOD had commanded them, that they ſhould not eat; and when arraigned before GOD, notwithſtanding their crime was ſo complicated, they could not be brought to confeſs it. What reaſon can be given, why ſentence of death ſhould not be pronounced againſt the priſoners at the bar? All muſt own they are worthy to die. Nay, how can GOD, conſiſtently with his juſtice, poſſibly forgive them? He had threatened, that the day wherein they eat of the forbidden fruit, they ſhould "ſurely die;" and, if he did not execute this threatening, the devil might then ſlander the Almighty indeed. And yet mercy cries, ſpare theſe ſinners, ſpare the work of thine own hands. Behold, then, wiſdom contrives a ſcheme how GOD may be juſt, and yet be merciful; be faithful to his threatening, puniſh the offence, and at the ſame time ſpare the offender. An amazing ſcene of divine love here opens to our view, which had been from all eternity hid in the heart of GOD! Notwithſtanding *Adam* and *Eve* were thus unhumbled, and did not ſo much as put up one ſingle petition for pardon, GOD immediately paſſes ſentence upon the ſerpent, and reveals to them a Saviour.

Verſe 14. "And the LORD GOD ſaid unto the ſerpent, becauſe thou haſt done this, thou art accurſed above all cattle, and above every beaſt of the field; upon thy belly ſhalt thou go, and duſt ſhalt thou eat all the days of thy life;" *i. e.* he ſhould be in ſubjection, and his power ſhould always be limited and reſtrained. "His enemies ſhall lick the very duſt," ſays the Pſalmiſt. (Ver. 15.) "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed: it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel."

Before I proceed to the explanation of this verſe, I cannot but take notice of one great miſtake which the author of the *Whole Duty of Man* is guilty of, in making this verſe contain a covenant between GOD and *Adam*, as though GOD now perſonally treated with *Adam*, as before the fall. For, talking

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of the ſecond covenant in his preface, concerning caring for the ſoul, ſays he, "This ſecond covenant was made with "*Adam*, and us in him, preſently after the fall, and is briefly "contained in theſe words, *Gen.* iii. 15. where GOD declares, "'The ſeed of the woman ſhall break the ſerpent's head;' "and this was made up, as the firſt was, of ſome mercies to "be afforded by GOD, and ſome duties to be performed by "us." This is exceeding falſe divinity: for theſe words are not ſpoken to *Adam*; they are directed only to the ſerpent. *Adam* and *Eve* ſtood by as criminals, and GOD could not treat with them, becauſe they had broken his covenant. And it is ſo far from being a covenant wherein "ſome mercies are to "be afforded by GOD, and ſome duties to be performed by us," that here is not a word looking that way; it is only a declaration of a free gift of ſalvation through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. GOD the Father and GOD the Son had entered into a covenant concerning the ſalvation of the elect from all eternity, wherein GOD the Father promiſed, That, if the Son would offer his ſoul a ſacrifice for ſin, he ſhould ſee his ſeed. Now this is an open revelation of this ſecret covenant, and therefore GOD ſpeaks in the moſt poſitive terms, "It ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel." The firſt *Adam*, GOD had treated with before; he proved falſe: GOD therefore, to ſecure the ſecond covenant from being broken, puts it into the hands of the ſecond *Adam*, the LORD from heaven. *Adam*, after the fall, ſtood no longer as our repreſentative; he and *Eve* were only private perſons, as we are, and were only to lay hold on the declaration of mercy contained in this promiſe by faith, (as they really did) and by that they were ſaved. I do not ſay but we are to believe and obey, if we are everlaſtingly ſaved. Faith and obedience are conditions, if we only mean that they in order go before our ſalvation; but I deny that theſe are propoſed by GOD to *Adam*, or that GOD treats with him in this promiſe, as he did before the fall under the covenant of works. For how could that be, when *Adam* and *Eve* were now priſoners at the bar, without ſtrength to perform any conditions at all? The truth is this: GOD, as a reward of CHRIST's ſufferings, promiſed to give the elect faith and repentance, in order to bring them to eternal life; and both theſe, and every thing elſe neceſſary for

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their everlaſting happineſs, are infallibly ſecured to them in this promiſe; as Mr. *Boſton*, an excellent *Scots* divine, clearly ſhews, in a book entitled, "A view of the covenant of "grace."

This is by no means an unneceſſary diſtinction; it is a matter of great importance: for want of knowing this, people have been ſo long miſled. They have been taught that they muſt DO ſo and ſo, as though they were under a covenant of works, and then for DOING this, they ſhould be ſaved. Whereas, on the contrary, people ſhould be taught, That the LORD JESUS was the ſecond *Adam*, with whom the Father entered into covenant for fallen man; That they can now do nothing of or for themſelves, and ſhould therefore come to GOD, beſeeching him to give them faith, by which they ſhall be enabled to lay hold on the righteouſneſs of CHRIST; and that faith they will then ſhew forth by their works, out of love and gratitude to the ever-bleſſed JESUS, their moſt glorious Redeemer, for what he has done for their ſouls. This is a conſiſtent ſcriptural ſcheme: without holding this, we muſt run into one of thoſe two bad extremes; I mean, *Antinomianiſm* on the one hand, or *Arminianiſm* on the other: from both which may the good LORD deliver us!

But to proceed: By the ſeed of the woman, we are here to underſtand the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who, though very GOD of very GOD, was, for us men and our ſalvation, to have a a body prepared for him by the Holy Ghoſt, and to be born of a woman who never knew man, and by his obedience and death make an atonement for man's tranſgreſſion, and bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, work in them a new nature, and thereby bruiſe the ſerpent's head, *i. e.* deſtroy his power and dominion over them. By the ſerpent's ſeed, we are to underſtand the devil and all his children, who are permitted by GOD to tempt and ſift his children. But, bleſſed be GOD, he can reach no further than our heel.

It is not to be doubted but *Adam* and *Eve* underſtood this promiſe in this ſenſe; for it is plain, in the latter part of the chapter, ſacrifices were inſtituted. From whence ſhould thoſe ſkins come, but from beaſts ſlain for ſacrifice, of which GOD made them coats? We find *Abel*, as well as *Cain*, offering ſacrifice in the next chapter: and the Apoſtle tells us, he did

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it by faith, no doubt in this promiſe. And *Eve*, when *Cain* was *born*, ſaid, "I have gotten a man from the LORD;" or, (as Mr. *Henry* obſerves, it may be rendered) "I have gotten a man,—the Lord,—the promiſed Meſſiah." Some further ſuppoſe, that *Eve* was the firſt believer; and therefore they tranſlate it thus, "The ſeed, (not of the, but) of this woman:" which magnifies the grace of GOD ſo much the more, that ſhe, who was firſt in the tranſgreſſion, ſhould be the firſt partaker of redemption. *Adam* believed alſo, and was ſaved: for unto *Adam* and his wife did the LORD GOD make coats of ſkins, and cloathed them: which was a remarkable type of their being clothed with the righteouſneſs of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

This promiſe was literally fulfilled in the perſon of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Satan bruiſed his heel, when he tempted him for forty days together in the wilderneſs: he bruiſed his heel, when he raiſed up ſtrong perſecution againſt him during the time of his public miniſtry: he in an eſpecial manner bruiſed his heel, when our LORD complained, that his ſoul was exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death, and he ſweat great drops of blood falling upon the ground, in the garden: He bruiſed his heel, when he put it into the heart of *Judas* to betray him: and he bruiſed him yet moſt of all, when his emiſſaries nailed him to an accurſed tree, and our LORD cried out, "My GOD, my GOD, why haſt thou forſaken me?" Yet, in all this, the bleſſed JESUS, the ſeed of the woman, bruiſed Satan's accurſed head: for, in that he was tempted, he was able to ſuccour thoſe that are tempted. By his ſtripes we are healed. The chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him. By dying, he deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. He thereby ſpoiled principalities and powers, and made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them upon the croſs.

This promiſe has been fulfilled in the elect of GOD, conſidered collectively, as well before, as ſince the coming of our LORD in the fleſh: for they may be called, the ſeed of the woman. Marvel not, that all who will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, muſt ſuffer perſecution. In this promiſe, there is an eternal enmity put between the ſeed of the woman, and the ſeed of the ſerpent; ſo that thoſe that are born after the fleſh, cannot but perſecute thoſe that are born after the ſpirit. This

enmity ſhewed itſelf, ſoon after this promiſe was revealed, in *Cain*'s bruiſing the heel of *Abel:* it continued in the church through all ages before CHRIST came in the fleſh, as the hiſtory of the Bible, and the xith chapter of the *Hebrews*, plainly ſhew. It raged exceedingly after our LORD's aſcenſion; witneſs the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, and the Hiſtory of the Primitive Chriſtians. It now rages, and will continue to rage and ſhew itſelf, in a greater or leſs degree, to the end of time. But let not this diſmay us; for in all this, the ſeed of the woman is more than conqueror, and bruiſes the ſerpent's head. Thus the *Iſraelites*, the more they were oppreſſed, the more they increaſed. Thus it was with the Apoſtles; thus it was with their immediate followers. So that *Tertullian* compares the church in his time to a mowed field; the more frequently it is cut, the more it grows. The blood of the martyrs was always the ſeed of the church. And I have often ſat down with wonder and delight, and admired how GOD has made the very ſchemes which his enemies contrived, in order to hinder, become the moſt effectual means to propagate his goſpel. The devil has had ſo little ſucceſs in perſecution, that if I did not know that he and his children, according to this verſe, could not but perſecute, I ſhould think he would count it his ſtrength to ſit ſtill. What did he get by perſecuting the martyrs in Queen *Mary*'s time? Was not the grace of GOD exceedingly glorified in their ſupport? What did he get by perſecuting the good old Puritans? Did it not prove the peopling of *New-England?* Or, to come nearer our own times, what has he got by putting *us* out of the ſynagogues? Hath not the word of GOD, ſince that, mightily prevailed? My dear hearers, you muſt excuſe me for enlarging on this head; GOD fills my ſoul generally, when I come to this topic. I can ſay with *Luther*, "If it were not for perſecution, I ſhould not underſtand the ſcripture." If Satan ſhould be yet ſuffered to bruiſe my heel further, and his ſervants ſhould thruſt me into priſon, I doubt not, but even that would only tend to the more effectual bruiſing of his head. I remember a ſaying of the then Lord Chancellor to the pious *Bradford:* "Thou haſt done more hurt, ſaid he, by thy exhortations in private in priſon, than thou didſt in preaching before thou waſt put in," or words to this effect. The promiſe of the text is my daily ſupport; "I will put enmity between

tween thy ſeed and her ſeed; it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel."

Further: this promiſe is alſo fulfilled, not only in the church in general, but in every individual believer in particular. In every believer there are two ſeeds, the ſeed of the woman, and the ſeed of the ſerpent; the fleſh luſting againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh. It is with the believer, when quickened with grace in his heart, as it was with *Rebekah*, when ſhe had conceived *Eſau* and *Jacob* in her womb; ſhe felt a ſtruggling, and began to be uneaſy; "If it be ſo, ſays ſhe, why am I thus?" Thus grace and nature ſtruggle (if I may ſo ſpeak) in the womb of a believer's heart: but, as it was there ſaid, "The elder ſhall ſerve the younger;" ſo it is here,—grace in the end ſhall get the better of nature; the ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head. Many of you that have believed in CHRIST, perhaps may find ſome particular corruption yet ſtrong, ſo ſtrong, that you are ſometimes ready to cry out with *David*, "I ſhall fall one day by the hand of *Saul*." But, fear not, the promiſe in the text inſures the perſeverance and victory of believers over ſin, Satan, death, and hell. What if indwelling corruption does yet remain, and the ſeed of the ſerpent bruiſe your heel, in vexing and diſturbing your righteous ſouls? Fear not, though faint, yet purſue: you ſhall yet bruiſe the ſerpent's head. CHRIST hath died for you; and yet a little while, and he will ſend death to deſtroy the very being of ſin in you. Which brings me

To ſhew the moſt extenſive manner in which the promiſe of the text ſhall be fulfilled, viz. at the final judgment, when the LORD JESUS ſhall preſent the elect to his Father, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, glorified both in body and ſoul.

Then ſhall the ſeed of the woman give the laſt and fatal blow, in bruiſing the ſerpent's head. Satan, the accuſer of the brethren, and all his accurſed ſeed, ſhall then be caſt out, and never ſuffered to diſturb the ſeed of the woman any more. Then ſhall the righteous ſhine as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father, and ſit with CHRIST on thrones in majeſty on high.

Let us, therefore, not be weary of well-doing; for we ſhall reap an eternal harveſt of comfort, if we faint not. Dare, dare, my dear brethren in CHRIST, to follow the Captain of your ſalvation; who was made perfect through ſufferings. The

ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head. Fear not men. Be not too much caſt down at the deceitfulneſs of your hearts. Fear not devils; you ſhall get the victory even over them. The LORD JESUS has engaged to make you more than conquerors over all. Plead with your Saviour, plead: plead the promiſe in the text. Wreſtle, wreſtle with GOD in prayer. If it has been given you to believe, fear not if it ſhould alſo be given you to ſuffer. Be not any wiſe terrified by your adverſaries; the king of the church has them all in a chain: be kind to them, pray for them; but fear them not. The LORD will yet bring back his ark, though at preſent driven into the wilderneſs; and Satan like lightening ſhall fall from heaven.

Are there any enemies of GOD here? The promiſe of the text encourages me to bid you defiance: the ſeed of the woman, the ever-bleſſed JESUS, ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head. What ſignifies all your malice? You are only raging waves of the ſea, foaming out your own ſhame. For you, without repentance, is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever. The LORD JESUS ſits in heaven, ruling over all, and cauſing all things to work for his childrens good: he laughs you to ſcorn: he hath you in the utmoſt deriſion, and therefore ſo will I. Who are you that perſecute the children of the ever-bleſſed GOD? Though a poor ſtripling, the LORD JESUS, the ſeed of the woman, will enable me to bruiſe your heads.

My brethren in CHRIST, I think I do not ſpeak thus in my own ſtrength, but in the ſtrength of my Redeemer. I know in whom I have believed; I am perſuaded he will keep that ſafe, which I have committed unto him. He is faithful who hath promiſed, that the ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head. May we all experience a daily completion of this promiſe, both in the church and in our hearts, till we come to the church of the firſt-born, the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, in the preſence and actual fruition of the great GOD our heavenly Father!

To whom, with the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed all honour, power, might, majeſty, and dominion, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

SERMON

SERMON II.

Walking with GOD.

GENESIS v. 24.

And Enoch *walked with* GOD, *and he was not, for* GOD *took him.*

VARIOUS are the pleas and arguments, which men of corrupt minds frequently urge againſt yielding obedience to the juſt and holy commands of GOD. But, perhaps, one of the moſt common objections that they make is this, that our LORD's commands are not practicable, becauſe contrary to fleſh and blood; and conſequently, that he is "an hard maſter, reaping where he has not ſown, and gathering where he has not ſtrewed." Theſe we find were the ſentiments entertained by that wicked and ſlothful ſervant mentioned in the xxvth of St. *Matthew*; and are undoubtedly the ſame with many which are maintained in the preſent wicked and adulterous generation. The Holy Ghoſt foreſeeing this, hath taken care to inſpire holy men of old, to record the examples of many holy men and women; who, even under the Old Teſtament diſpenſation, were enabled chearfully to take CHRIST's yoke upon them, and counted his ſervice perfect freedom. The large catalogue of ſaints, confeſſors, and martyrs, drawn up in the xith chapter to the *Hebrews*, abundantly evidences the truth of this obſervation. What a great cloud of witneſſes have we there preſented to our view? All eminent for their faith, but ſome ſhining with a greater degree of luſtre than do others. The proto-martyr *Abel*, leads the van. And next to him, we find *Enoch* mentioned, not only becauſe he was next in order of time, but alſo on account of his exalted piety. He is ſpoken of in the words of the text in a very extraordinary manner. We have here

a ſhort but very full and glorious account, both of his behaviour in this world, and the triumphant manner of his entering into the next. The former is contained in theſe words, "And *Enoch* walked with GOD." The latter in theſe, "and "he was not: for GOD took him." He was not; i. e. He was not found, he was not taken away in the common manner, he did not ſee death; for *Heb.* xi. 5. GOD had tranſlated him. Who this *Enoch* was, does not appear ſo plainly. To me, he ſeems to have been a perſon of public character. I ſuppoſe, like *Noah*, a preacher of righteouſneſs. And, if we may credit the Apoſtle *Jude*, he was a flaming preacher. For he quotes one of his prophecies, wherein he ſaith, "Behold, the LORD cometh with ten thouſand of his ſaints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches, which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him." But whether a public or private perſon, he has a noble teſtimony given him in the lively oracles. The author of the epiſtle to the *Hebrews* ſaith, that before his tranſlation he had this teſtimony, "that he pleaſed GOD;" and his being tranſlated, was a proof of it beyond all doubt. And I would obſerve, that it was wonderful wiſdom in GOD to tranſlate *Enoch* and *Elijah* under the Old Teſtament diſpenſation, that hereafter when it ſhould be aſſerted, that the LORD JESUS was carried into heaven, it might not ſeem a thing altogether incredible to the *Jews*; ſince they themſelves confeſſed, that two of their own prophets had been tranſlated ſeveral hundred years before. But it is not my deſign to detain you any longer, by enlarging, or making obſervations on *Enoch*'s ſhort, but comprehenſive character. The thing I have in view, being to give a diſcourſe, as the LORD ſhall enable, upon a weighty and a very important ſubject; I mean, *walking with* GOD. "And *Enoch* walked with GOD." If ſo much as this can be truly ſaid of you and me after our deceaſe, we ſhall not have any reaſon to complain, that we have lived in vain.

In handling my intended ſubject, I ſhall,

Firſt, Endeavour to ſhew, what is implied in theſe words *walked with* GOD.

Secondly,

Secondly, I ſhall preſcribe ſome means, upon the due obſervance of which, believers may keep up and maintain their *walk with* GOD. And,

Thirdly, Offer ſome motives to ſtir us up, if we never walked with GOD before, to come and walk with GOD now. The whole ſhall be cloſed with a word or two of application.

Firſt, I am to ſhew what is implied in theſe words, "walked with GOD;" or in other words, what we are to underſtand by *walking with* GOD.

And *Firſt*, *Walking with* GOD, implies, that the prevailing power of the enmity of a perſon's heart, be taken away by the bleſſed Spirit of GOD. Perhaps it may ſeem a hard ſaying to ſome, but our own experience daily proves, what the ſcripture in many places aſſert, that the carnal mind, the mind of the unconverted, natural man, nay, the mind of the regenerate, ſo far as any part of him remains unrenewed, is enmity, not only an enemy, but "enmity itſelf againſt GOD; "ſo that it is not ſubject to the law of GOD, neither indeed "can it be." Indeed one may well wonder that any creature, eſpecially that lovely creature man, made after his Maker's own image, ſhould ever have any enmity, much leſs a prevailing enmity againſt that very GOD in whom he lives, and moves, and hath his being. But alas! ſo it is. Our firſt parents contracted it when they fell from GOD by eating the forbidden fruit, and the bitter and malignant contagion of it, hath deſcended to, and quite overſpread their whole poſterity. This enmity diſcovered itſelf, in *Adam*'s endeavouring to hide himſelf in the trees of the garden. When he heard the voice of the LORD GOD, inſtead of running with an open heart, ſaying, Here am I; alas! he now wanted no communion with GOD; and ſtill more diſcovered his lately contracted enmity, by the excuſe he made to the Moſt High. "The woman, "or this woman, thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of "the tree, and I did eat." By ſaying thus, he in effect lays all the fault upon GOD; as though he had ſaid, if thou hadſt not given me this woman, I had not ſinned againſt thee, ſo thou mayſt thank thyſelf for my tranſgreſſion. In the ſame manner this enmity works in the hearts of *Adam*'s children. They now and again find ſomething riſing againſt GOD, and

ſaying even unto GOD, what doeſt thou? "It ſcorns any "meaner competitor (ſays the learned Doctor *Owen* in his "excellent treatiſe on indwelling ſin) than GOD himſelf." Its command is like that of the *Aſſyrians* in reſpect to *Ahab*, Shoot only at the King. And it ſtrikes againſt every thing that has the appearance of real piety, as the *Aſſyrians* ſhot at *Jehoſaphat* in *Ahab*'s cloathes. But the oppoſition ceaſes when it finds that it is only an appearance, as the *Aſſyrians* left off ſhooting at *Jehoſaphat*, when they perceived it was not *Ahab* they were ſhooting at. This enmity diſcovered itſelf in accurſed *Cain*; he hated and ſlew his brother *Abel*, becauſe *Abel* loved, and was peculiarly favoured by his GOD. And this ſame enmity rules and prevails in every man that is naturally engendered of the offspring of *Adam*. Hence that averſeneſs to prayer and holy duties, which we find in children, and very often in grown perſons, who have notwithſtanding been bleſſed with a religious education. And all that open ſin and wickedneſs, which like a deluge has overflowed the world, are only ſo many ſtreams running from this dreadful, contagious fountain; I mean the enmity of man's deſperately wicked and deceitful heart. He that cannot ſet his ſeal to this, knows nothing yet, in a ſaving manner, of the holy ſcriptures, or of the power of GOD. And all that do know this, will readily acknowledge, that before a perſon can be ſaid to walk with GOD, the prevailing power of this heart-enmity muſt be deſtroyed. For perſons do not uſe to walk and keep company together, who entertain an irreconcilable enmity and hatred againſt one another. Obſerve me, I ſay, the prevailing power of this enmity muſt be taken away. For the inbeing of it will never be totally removed, till we bow down our heads and give up the ghoſt. The apoſtle *Paul*, no doubt, ſpeaks of himſelf, and that too not when he was a phariſee, but a real chriſtian; when he complains, "that when he would do good, evil was preſent with him;" not having dominion over him, but oppoſing and reſiſting his good intentions and actions, "ſo that "he could not do the things which he would," in that perfection which the new man deſired. This is what he calls ſin dwelling in him. "And this is that φρόνημα σαρκος, which, "(to uſe the words of the ninth article of our church,)

"ſome do expound the wiſdom, ſome ſenſuality, ſome the "affectation, ſome the deſire of the fleſh, which doth remain, "yea, in them that are regenerated." But as for its prevailing power, it is deſtroyed in every ſoul that is truly born of GOD, and gradually more and more weakened as the believer grows in grace, and the ſpirit of GOD gains a greater and greater aſcendancy in the heart.

But *Secondly*, Walking with GOD not only implies, that the prevailing power of the enmity of a man's heart be taken away, but alſo that a perſon is actually reconciled to GOD the Father, in and through the all-ſufficient righteouſneſs and atonement of his dear Son. "Can two walk together, (ſays "*Solomon*), unleſs they are agreed?" JESUS is our peace, as well as our peace-maker. When we are juſtified by faith in CHRIST, then, but not till then, we have peace with GOD; and conſequently cannot be ſaid till then, to walk with him. Walking with a perſon, being a ſign and token that we are friends to that perſon, or at leaſt, though we have been at variance, yet that now we are reconciled and become friends again. This is the great errand that goſpel miniſters are ſent out upon. To us is committed the miniſtry of reconciliation: As ambaſſadors for GOD, we are to beſeech ſinners, in CHRIST's ſtead, to be reconciled unto GOD; and when they comply with the gracious invitation, and are actually by faith brought into a ſtate of reconciliation with GOD, then, and not till then, may they be ſaid ſo much as to begin to walk with GOD.

Further, *Thirdly*, Walking with GOD implies, a ſettled, abiding communion and fellowſhip with GOD, or what in ſcripture is called, "The Holy Ghoſt dwelling in us." This is what our LORD promiſed when he told his diſciples, that "the Holy Spirit ſhould be in, and with them;" not to be like a wayfaring-man, to ſtay only for a night, but to reſide and make his abode in their hearts. This I am apt to believe is what the Apoſtle *John* would have us underſtand, when he talks of a perſon abiding in him, in CHRIST, "and "walking as he himſelf alſo walked." And this is what is particularly meant in the words of our text. "And *Enoch* "walked with GOD." i. e. He kept up and maintained a holy, ſettled, habitual, though undoubtedly not altogether uninterrupted

uninterrupted communion and fellowſhip with GOD, in and through CHRIST JESUS. So that to ſum up what has been ſaid on this part of the firſt general head, *walking with* GOD conſiſts eſpecially in the fixed habitual bent of the will for GOD, in an habitual dependance upon his power and promiſe, in an habitual voluntary dedication of our all to his glory, in an habitual eying of his precept in all we do, and in an habitual complacence in his pleaſure in all we ſuffer.

Fourthly, *Walking with* GOD implies, our making progreſs or advances in the divine life. *Walking*, in the very firſt idea of the word, ſeems to ſuppoſe a progreſſive motion. A perſon that walks, though he move ſlowly, yet he goes forwards and does not continue in one place. And ſo it is with thoſe that walk with GOD. They go on, as the pſalmiſt ſays, from ſtrength to ſtrength;" or, in the language of the Apoſtle *Paul*, " they paſs from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the LORD." Indeed in one ſenſe, the divine life admits of neither increaſe nor decreaſe. When a ſoul is born of GOD, to all intents and purpoſes he is a child of GOD, and, though he ſhould live to the age of *Methuſelah*, yet he would then be only a child of GOD, after all. But in another ſenſe, the divine life admits of decays and additions. Hence it is, that we find the people of GOD charged with backſlidings, and loſing their firſt love. And hence it is, that we hear of babes, young men and fathers in CHRIST; and upon this account it is that the Apoſtle exhorts *Timothy*, " to let his progreſs be made known to all men." And what is here required of *Timothy* in particular; by St. *Peter*, is enjoined all chriſtians in general, " But grow in grace, (ſays he) and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST." For the new creature increaſes in ſpiritual ſtature; and though a perſon can but be a new creature, yet there are ſome that are more conformed to the divine image than others, and will, after death, be admitted to a greater degree of bleſſedneſs. For want of obſerving this diſtinction, even ſome gracious ſouls that have better hearts than heads, (as well as men of corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith) have unawares run into downright *Antinomian* principles, denying all growth of grace in a believer, or any marks of grace to be laid down in the ſcriptures of truth. From

ſuch

ſuch principles, and more eſpecially from practices naturally conſequent on ſuch principles, may the LORD of all Lord's deliver us!

From what then has been ſaid, we may now know what is implied in the words, "walked with GOD," viz. Our having the prevailing enmity of our hearts taken away by the power of the Spirit of GOD; our being actually reconciled and united to him by faith in JESUS CHRIST; our having and keeping up a ſettled communion and fellowſhip with him; and our making a daily progreſs in this fellowſhip, ſo as to be conformed to the divine image more and more.

How this is done, or, in other words, by what means believers keep up and maintain their walk with GOD, comes to be conſidered under our ſecond general head.

And, *Firſt*, Believers keep up and maintain their walk with GOD, by reading of his holy word. "Search the ſcriptures," ſays our bleſſed LORD, "for theſe are they that teſtify of me." And the royal pſalmiſt tells us, "that GOD's word was a light unto his feet, and a lanthorn unto his paths;" and he makes it one property of a good man, "that his delight is in the law of the LORD, and that he exerciſes himſelf therein day and night." "Give thyſelf to reading," (ſays *Paul* to *Timothy*); "And this book of the law, (ſays GOD to *Joſhua*) ſhall not go out of thy mouth." For whatſoever was written in afore time, was written for our learning. And the word of GOD is profitable for reproof, correction, and inſtruction in righteouſneſs, and every way ſufficient to make every true child of GOD thoroughly furniſhed to every good work. If we once get above our Bibles, and ceaſe making the written word of GOD our ſole rule, both as to faith and practice, we ſhall ſoon lie open to all manner of deluſion, and be in great danger of making ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience. Our bleſſed LORD, though he had the Spirit of GOD without meaſure, yet always was governed by, and fought the devil with, "It is written." This the Apoſtle calls the "Sword of the Spirit." We may ſay of it as *David* ſaid of *Goliah*'s ſword, "None like this." The ſcriptures are called the lively oracles of GOD: not only becauſe they are generally made uſe of to beget in us a new life, but alſo to keep up and increaſe it in the ſoul. The Apoſtle *Peter*, in his 2d epiſtle, prefers it even to ſeeing

CHRIST

CHRIST transfigured upon the mount. For after he had ſaid, chap. i. 18. "That the voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount;" he adds, "We have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light ſhining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe in your hearts:" i. e. Till we ſhake off theſe bodies, and ſee JESUS face to face. Till then, we muſt ſee and converſe with him through the glaſs of his word. We muſt make his teſtimonies our counſellors, and daily, with *Mary*, ſit at JESUS feet, by faith hearing his word. We ſhall then by happy experience find, that they are ſpirit and life, meat indeed, and drink indeed to our ſouls.

Secondly, Believers keep up and maintain their walk with GOD by ſecret prayer. The ſpirit of grace is always accompanied with the ſpirit of ſupplication. It is the very breath of the new-creature, the fan of the divine life, whereby the ſpark of holy fire kindled in the ſoul by GOD, is not only kept in, but raiſed into a flame. A neglect of ſecret prayer has been frequently an inlet to many ſpiritual diſeaſes, and has been attended with fatal conſequences. *Origen* obſerved, "That the day he offered incenſe to an idol, he went out of "his cloſet without making uſe of ſecret prayer." It is one of the moſt noble parts of the believer's ſpiritual armour. "Praying always, ſays the Apoſtle, with all manner of ſupplication." "Watch and pray, ſays our LORD, that ye enter not into temptation." And he ſpake a parable, that his diſciples ſhould pray, and not faint. Not that our LORD would have us always upon our knees, or in our cloſets, to the neglect of our other relative duties. But he means, that our ſouls ſhould be kept in a praying-frame, ſo that we might be able to ſay, as a good man in *Scotland* once ſaid to his friends on his death-bed, "Could theſe curtains, or could "theſe walls ſpeak, they would tell you what ſweet com-"munion I have had with my GOD here." O prayer, prayer! It brings and keeps GOD and man together. It raiſes man up to GOD, and brings GOD down to man. If you would therefore, O believers, keep up your walk with GOD; pray, pray without ceaſing. Be much in ſecret, ſet prayer. And when you are about the common buſineſs of life,

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be much in ejaculatory prayer, and ſend, from time to time, ſhort letters poſt to heaven upon the wings of faith. They will reach the very heart of GOD, and return to you again loaded with ſpiritual bleſſings.

Thirdly, Holy and frequent meditation is another bleſſed means of keeping up a believer's walk with GOD. "Prayer, "reading, temptation, and meditation," ſays *Luther*, "make "a miniſter." And they alſo make, and perfect a chriſtian. Meditation to the ſoul, is the ſame as digeſtion to the body. Holy *David* found it ſo, and therefore he was frequently employed in meditation, even in the night ſeaſon. We read alſo of *Iſaac*'s going out into the fields to meditate in the evening; or, as it is in the margin, to pray. For meditation is a kind of ſilent prayer, whereby the ſoul is frequently, as it were, carried out of itſelf to GOD, and in a degree made like unto thoſe bleſſed Spirits, who by a kind of immediate intuition always behold the face of our heavenly Father. None but thoſe happy ſouls that have been accuſtomed to this divine employ, can tell what a bleſſed promoter of the divine life, meditation is. "Whilſt I was muſing, ſays *David*, the fire kindled." And whilſt the believer is muſing on the works and word of GOD; eſpecially that work of works, that wonder of wonders, that myſtery of godlineſs, "GOD manifeſt in the fleſh," the Lamb of GOD ſlain for the ſins of the world: he frequently feels the fire of divine love kindle, ſo that he is obliged to ſpeak with his tongue, and tell of the loving-kindneſs of the LORD to his ſoul. Be frequent therefore in meditation, all ye that deſire to keep up and maintain a cloſe and uniform walk with the moſt-high GOD.

Fourthly, Believers keep up their walk with GOD, by watching and noting his providential dealings with them. If we believe the ſcriptures, we muſt believe what our LORD hath declared therein, "That the very hairs of his diſciples heads are all numbered; and that a ſparrow does not fall to the ground, (either to pick up a grain of corn, or when ſhot by a fowler) without the knowledge of our heavenly Father." Every croſs has a call in it, and every particular diſpenſation of divine providence, has ſome particular end to anſwer in thoſe to whom it is ſent. If it be of an afflictive nature,

nature, GOD does thereby ſay, "My ſon, keep thyſelf from idols:" if proſperous, he does it as it were by a ſmall, ſtill voice, ſay, "My ſon, give me thy heart." If believers, therefore, would keep up their walk with GOD, they muſt from time to time hear what the LORD has to ſay concerning them in the voice of his providence. Thus we find *Abraham*'s ſervant, when he went to fetch a wife for his maſter *Iſaac*, eyed and watched the providence of GOD, and by that means found out the perſon that was deſigned for his maſter's wife. "For "a little hint from Providence," ſays pious Biſhop *Hall*, "is "enough for faith to feed upon." And as I believe it will be one part of our happineſs in heaven, to take a view of, and look back upon, the various links of the golden chain which drew us there; ſo thoſe that enjoy moſt of heaven below, I believe, will be moſt minute in remarking GOD's various dealings with them, in reſpect to his providential diſpenſations here on earth.

Fifthly, In order to walk cloſely with GOD, his children muſt not only watch the motions of GOD's providence without them, but the motions alſo of his bleſſed Spirit in their hearts. "As many as are the ſons of GOD, are led by the Spirit of GOD," and give up themſelves to be guided by the Holy Ghoſt, as a little child gives its hand to be led by a nurſe or parent. It is no doubt in this ſenſe, that we are to be converted, and become like little children. And though it is the quinteſſence of enthuſiaſm, to pretend to be guided by the Spirit without the written word; yet it is every chriſtian's bounden duty to be guided by the Spirit in conjunction with the written word of GOD. Watch, therefore, I pray you, O believers, the motions of GOD's bleſſed Spirit in your ſouls, and always try the ſuggeſtions or impreſſions that you may at any time feel, by the unerring rule of GOD's moſt holy word: and if they are not found to be agreeable to that, reject them as diabolical and deluſive. By obſerving this caution, you will ſteer a middle courſe between the two dangerous extremes many of this generation are in danger of running into; I mean, *enthuſiaſm*, on the one hand, and *deiſm*, and *downright infidelity*, on the other.

Sixthly, They that would maintain a holy walk with GOD, muſt walk with him in ordinances as well as providences, &c.

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It is, therefore, recorded of *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, that "They walked in all GOD's ordinances as well as commandments, blameleſs." And all rightly informed chriſtians, will look upon ordinances, not as beggarly elements, but as ſo many conduit-pipes, whereby the infinitely condeſcending *Jehovah* conveys his grace to their ſouls. They will look upon them as childrens bread, and as their higheſt privileges. Conſequently they will be glad when they hear others ſay, "Come, let us go up to the houſe of the LORD." They will delight to viſit the place where GOD's honour dwelleth, and be very eager to embrace all opportunities to ſhew forth the LORD CHRIST's death till he come.

Seventhly and *laſtly*, If you would walk with GOD, you will aſſociate and keep company with thoſe that do walk with him. "My delight, ſays holy *David*, is in them that do excel" in virtue. They were in his ſight, the excellent ones of the earth. And the primitive chriſtians, no doubt, kept up their vigour and firſt love, by continuing in fellowſhip one with another. The Apoſtle *Paul* knew this full well, and therefore exhorts the chriſtians to ſee to it, that they did not forſake the aſſembling of themſelves together. For how can one be warm alone? And has not the wiſeſt of men told us, that, "as iron ſharpeneth iron, ſo doth the countenance of a man his friend?" If we look, therefore, into church hiſtory, or make a juſt obſervation of our own times, I believe we ſhall find, that as the power of GOD prevails, chriſtian ſocieties, and fellowſhip meetings prevail proportionably. And as one decays, the other has inſenſibly decayed and dwindled away at the ſame time. So neceſſary is it for thoſe that would walk with GOD, and keep up the life of religion, to meet together as they have opportunity, in order to provoke one another to love and good works.

Proceed we now to the Third general thing propoſed, To offer ſome motives to excite all to come and walk with GOD.

And *Firſt*, Walking with GOD, is a very honourable thing. This generally is a prevailing motive to perſons of all ranks, to ſtir them up to any important undertaking. O that it may have its due weight and influence with you, in reſpect to the matter now before us! I ſuppoſe you would all think it a very

high honour to be admitted into an earthly prince's privy-council, to be truſted with his ſecrets, and to have his ear at all times, and at all ſeaſons. It ſeems *Haman* thought it ſo, when he boaſted, *Eſth.* v. 11, that beſides his being "advanced above the princes and ſervants of the king; yea, moreover, *Eſther* the Queen did let no man come in with the King unto the banquet that ſhe had prepared, but myſelf; and to-morrow am I invited unto her alſo with the King." And when afterwards a queſtion was put to this ſame *Haman*, chap. vi. 6. "What ſhall be done unto the man whom the King delighteth to honour?" he anſwered, ver. 8. "Let the royal apparel be brought which the king uſed to wear, and the horſe that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is ſet upon his head; and let this apparel and horſe be delivered to the hand of one of the king's moſt noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the King delights to honour, and bring him on horſeback through the ſtreet of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus ſhall it be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honour." This was all then, it ſeems, that an ambitious *Haman* could aſk, and the moſt valuable thing that he thought *Ahaſuerus*, the greateſt monarch upon earth, could give. But alas, what is this honour in compariſon of that which the meaneſt of thoſe enjoy, that walk with GOD! Think ye it a ſmall thing, Sirs, to have the ſecret of the LORD of Lords with you, and to be called the friends of GOD? and ſuch honour have all GOD's ſaints. "The ſecret of the LORD is with them that fear him:" and "Henceforth, ſays the bleſſed JESUS, call I you no longer ſervants, but friends; for the ſervant knoweth not the will of his maſter." Whatever you may think of it, holy *David* was ſo ſenſible of the honour attending a walk with GOD, that he declares, "He had rather be a door-keeper in his houſe, than to dwell even in the tents of ungodlineſs." O that all were like-minded with him!

But, *Secondly*, As it is an honourable, ſo it is a pleaſing thing to walk with GOD. The wiſeſt of men has told us, that "Wiſdom's ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths peace." And I remember pious Mr. *Henry*, when he was juſt about to expire, ſaid to a friend, "You have heard "many mens dying words, and theſe are mine; A life ſpent

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"in communion with GOD, is the pleaſanteſt life in the "world." I am ſure I can ſet to my ſeal that this is true: Indeed, I have been liſted under JESUS's banner only for a few years; but I have enjoyed more ſolid pleaſure in one moment's communion with my GOD, than I ſhould or could have enjoyed in the ways of ſin, though I had continued to have went on in them for thouſands of years. And may I not appeal to all you that fear and walk with GOD, for the truth of this? Has not one day in the LORD's courts, been to you better than a thouſand? In keeping GOD's commandments, have you not found a preſent and very great reward? Has not his word been ſweeter to you than the honey, or the honey-comb? O what have you felt, when, *Jacob*-like, you have been wreſtling with your GOD? Has not JESUS often met you when meditating in the fields, and been made known to you over and over again in breaking of bread? Has not the Holy Ghoſt frequently ſhed the divine love abroad in your hearts abundantly, and filled you with joy unſpeakable, even joy that is full of glory? I know you will anſwer all theſe queſtions in the affirmative, and freely acknowledge the yoke of CHRIST to be eaſy, and his burden light; or (to uſe the words of one of our collects) "That "his ſervice is perfect freedom." And what need we then any further motive to excite us to walk with GOD?

But methinks I hear ſome among you ſay, "How can "theſe things be? For, if walking with GOD, as you ſay, is "ſuch an honourable and pleaſant thing, whence is it, that the "name of the people of this way is caſt out as evil, and every "where ſpoken againſt? How comes it to paſs that they are "frequently afflicted, tempted, deſtitute, and tormented? Is "this the honour, this the pleaſure that you ſpeak of?" I anſwer, Yes. Stop a while; be not over-haſty. Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment, and all will be well. It is true, we acknowledge the "people of "this way," as you, and *Paul* before you, when a perſecutor, called them, have their names caſt out as evil, and are a ſect every where ſpoken againſt. But by whom? Even by the enemies of the moſt high GOD. And do you think it a diſgrace to be ſpoken evil of by them? Bleſſed be GOD, we have not ſo learnt CHRIST. Our royal Maſter has pro-

nounced thoſe "bleſſed, who are perſecuted, and have all manner of evil ſpoken againſt them falſly." He has commanded them "to rejoice and be exceeding glad." For it is the priviledge of their diſcipleſhip, and that their reward will be great in heaven. He himſelf was thus treated. And can there be a greater honour put upon a creature, than to be conformed to the ever-bleſſed Son of GOD? And further, it is equally true, that the people of this way are frequently afflicted, tempted, deſtitute, and tormented. But what of all this? Does this deſtroy the pleaſure of walking with GOD? No, in no wiſe; for thoſe that walk with GOD, are enabled, through CHRIST ſtrengthening them, to joy even in tribulation, and to rejoice when they fall into divers temptations. And I believe I may appeal to the experience of all true and cloſe walkers with GOD, Whether or not their ſuffering times, have not frequently been their ſweeteſt times, and that they enjoyed moſt of GOD, when moſt caſt out, and deſpiſed by men? This we find was the caſe of CHRIST's primitive ſervants, when threatened by the *Jewiſh* ſanhedrim, and commanded to preach no more in the name of JESUS; they rejoiced, that they were accounted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the ſake of JESUS. *Paul* and *Silas* ſang praiſes even in a dungeon; and the face of *Stephen*, that glorious proto-martyr of the chriſtian church, ſhone like the face of an angel. And JESUS is the ſame now, as he was then, and takes care ſo to ſweeten ſufferings and afflictions with his love, that his diſciciples find, by happy experience, that as afflictions abound, conſolations do much more abound. And therefore theſe objections, inſtead of deſtroying, do only more enforce the motives before urged to excite you to walk with GOD.

But ſuppoſing the objections were juſt, and walkers with GOD were as deſpicable and unhappy as you would repreſent them to be; yet I have a third motive to offer, which, if weighed in the balance of the ſanctuary, will over-weigh all objections, viz. That there is a heaven at the end of this walk. For, to uſe the words of pious Biſhop *Beveridge*, "Though "the way be narrow, yet it is not long; and though the gate "be ſtraight, yet it opens into everlaſting life." *Enoch* found it ſo. He walked with GOD on earth, and GOD took him to ſit down with him for ever in the kingdom of heaven. Not that we are to expect to be taken away as he was: no; I ſup-

poſe we ſhall all die the common death of all men. But after death, the ſpirits of thoſe who have walked with GOD, ſhall return to GOD that gave them; and at the morning of the reſurrection, ſoul and body ſhall be for ever with the LORD. Their bodies ſhall be faſhioned like unto CHRIST's glorious body, and their ſouls filled with all the fulneſs of GOD. They ſhall ſit on thrones; they ſhall judge angels. They ſhall be enabled to ſuſtain an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, even that glory which JESUS CHRIST enjoyed with the Father before the world began. *O gloriam quantam et qualem*, ſays the learned and pious *Arndt*, juſt before he bowed down his head, and gave up the ghoſt. The very thought of it is enough to make us "wiſh to leap our ſeventy years," as good Dr. *Watts* expreſſes himſelf, and to make us break out into the earneſt language of the royal Pſalmiſt, "My ſoul is athirſt for GOD, yea for the living GOD. When ſhall I come to appear in the immediate preſence of my GOD?" I wonder not that a ſenſe of this, when under a more than ordinary irradiation and influx of divine life and love, cauſes ſome perſons even to faint away, and for a time loſe the power of their ſenſes. A leſs ſight than this, even a ſight of *Solomon*'s glory, made *Sheba*'s queen aſtoniſhed; and a ſtill leſſer ſight than that, even a ſight of *Joſeph*'s waggons, made holy *Jacob* to faint, and for a while, as it were, die away. *Daniel*, when admitted to a diſtant view of this excellent glory, fell down at the feet of the angel as one dead. And if a diſtant view of this glory be ſo excellent, what muſt the actual poſſeſſion of it be? If the firſt fruits are ſo glorious, how infinitely muſt the harveſt exceed in glory?

And now what ſhall I, or indeed what can I well ſay more, to excite you, even you that are yet ſtrangers to CHRIST, to come and walk with GOD? If you love honour, pleaſure, and a crown of glory, come, ſeek it where alone it can be found. Come, put ye on the LORD JESUS. Come, haſte ye away and walk with GOD, and make no longer proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſt thereof. Stop, ſtop, O ſinner! turn ye, turn ye, O ye unconverted men! for the end of that way you are now walking in, however right it may ſeem in your blinded eyes, will be death, even eternal deſtruction both of body and ſoul. Make no long tarrying, I ſay: at your peril, I charge you, ſtep not one ſtep further on in

your preſent walk. For how knoweſt thou, O man, but the next ſtep thou takeſt may be into hell? Death may ſeize thee, judgment find thee, and then the great gulph will be fixed between thee and endleſs glory, for ever and ever. O think of theſe things, all ye that are unwilling to come and walk with GOD. Lay them to heart. Shew yourſelves men, and in the ſtrength of JESUS ſay, Farewel luſt of the fleſh, I will no more walk with thee! Farewel luſt of the eye, and pride of life! Farewel carnal acquaintance, and enemies of the croſs, I will no more walk and be intimate with you! Welcome JESUS, welcome thy word, welcome thy ordinances, welcome thy Spirit, welcome thy people, I will henceforth walk with you. O that there may be in you ſuch a mind! GOD will ſet his almighty fiat to it, and ſeal it with the broad ſeal of heaven, even the ſignet of his Holy Spirit. Yes, he will, though you have been walking with, and following after, the devices and deſires of your deſperately wicked hearts, ever ſince you have been born. "I the high and lofty one," ſays the great Jehovah, "that inhabiteth eternity, will dwell with the humble and contrite heart, even with the man that trembleth at my word." The blood, even the precious blood of JESUS CHRIST, if you come to the Father in and through him, ſhall cleanſe you from all ſin.

But the text leads me to ſpeak to you that are ſaints, as well as to you that are open or unconverted ſinners. I need not tell you that walking with GOD is not only honourable, but pleaſant and profitable alſo: for ye know it by happy experience, and will find it more and more ſo every day. Only give me leave to ſtir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, and to beſeech you by the mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, to take heed to yourſelves, and walk cloſer with your GOD, than you have in days paſt: for the nearer you walk with GOD, the more you will enjoy of Him whoſe preſence is life, and be the better prepared for being placed at his right-hand, where are pleaſures for evermore. O do not follow JESUS afar off! O be not ſo formal, ſo dead and ſtupid in your attendance on holy ordinances! Do not ſo ſhamefully forſake the aſſembling yourſelves together, or be ſo niggardly, and ſo indifferent about the things of GOD. Remember

member what JESUS ſays of the church of *Laodicea*, "Becauſe thou art neither hot nor cold, I will ſpew thee out of my mouth." Think of the love of JESUS, and let that love conſtrain you to keep near unto him; and though you die for him, do not deny him, do not keep at a diſtance from him in any wiſe.

One word to my brethren in the miniſtry that are here preſent, and I have done. You ſee, my brethren, my heart is full; I could almoſt ſay it is too big to ſpeak, and yet too big to be ſilent, without dropping a word to you. For does not the text ſpeak in a particular manner to thoſe who have the honour of being ſtiled the ambaſſadors of CHRIST, and ſtewards of the myſteries of GOD? I obſerved at the beginning of this diſcourſe, that *Enoch* in all probability was a public perſon, and a flaming preacher. Though he be dead, does he not yet ſpeak to us, to quicken our zeal, and make us more active in the ſervice of our glorious and ever-bleſſed Maſter? How did *Enoch* preach? How did *Enoch* walk with GOD, though he lived in a wicked and adulterous generation? Let us then follow him, as he followed JESUS CHRIST, and ere long, where he is, there ſhall we be alſo. He is now entered into his reſt: yet a little while, and we ſhall enter into ours, and that too much ſooner than he did. He ſojourned here below three hundred years; but bleſſed be GOD, the days of man are now ſhortened, and in a few days our work will be over. The Judge is before the door: he that cometh will come, and will not tarry: his reward is with him. And we ſhall all (if we are zealous for the LORD of Hoſts) ere long ſhine as the ſtars in the firmament, in the kingdom of our heavenly Father, for ever and ever. To Him, the bleſſed JESUS, and eternal Spirit, be all honour and glory, now, and to all eternity. *Amen*, and *Amen*.

SERMON III.

Abraham's offering up his Son *Iſaac*.

GENESIS XXII. 12.

And he ſaid, Lay not thine Hand upon the Lad, neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt not withheld thy Son, thine only Son from me.

THE great Apoſtle *Paul*, in one of his epiſtles, informs us, that "whatſoever was written aforetime was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the holy ſcripture might have hope." And as without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe GOD, or be accepted in JESUS, the Son of his love; we may be aſſured, that whatever inſtances of a more than common faith are recorded in the book of GOD, they were more immediately deſigned by the holy Spirit for our learning and imitation, upon whom the ends of the world are come. For this reaſon, the author of the epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, in the xith chapter, mentions ſuch a noble catalogue of Old Teſtament ſaints and martyrs, "who ſubdued kingdoms, wrought righteouſneſs, ſtopped the mouths of lions, *&c.* and are gone before us to inherit the promiſes." A ſufficient confutation, I think, of their error, who lightly eſteem the Old Teſtament ſaints, and would not have them mentioned to chriſtians, as perſons whoſe faith and patience we are called upon more immediately to follow. If this was true, the apoſtle would never have produced ſuch a cloud of witneſſes out of the Old Teſtament, to excite the chriſtians of the firſt, and conſequently pureſt age of the church, to continue ſtedfaſt and unmoveable in the profeſſion of their faith. Amidſt this catalogue of ſaints, methinks the patriarch *Abraham* ſhines the brighteſt, and differs from the others, as

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one ſtar differeth from another ſtar in glory; for he ſhone with ſuch diſtinguiſhed luſtre, that he was called the "friend of GOD," the "father of the faithful;" and thoſe who believe on CHRIST, are ſaid to be "ſons and daughters of, and to "be bleſſed with, faithful *Abraham*." Many trials of his faith did GOD ſend this great and good man, after he had commanded him to get out from his country, and from his kindred, unto a land which he ſhould ſhew him; but the laſt was the moſt ſevere of all, I mean, that of offering up his only ſon. This, by the divine aſſiſtance, I propoſe to make the ſubject of your preſent meditation, and, by way of concluſion, to draw ſome practical inferences, as GOD ſhall enable me, from this inſtructive ſtory.

The ſacred penman begins the narrative thus; verſe 1. "And it came to paſs, after theſe things, GOD did tempt *Abraham*." After theſe things, that is, after he had underwent many ſevere trials before, after he was old, full of days, and might flatter himſelf perhaps that the troubles and toils of life were now finiſhed; "after theſe things, GOD did tempt *Abraham*." Chriſtians, you know not what trials you may meet with before you die: notwithſtanding you may have ſuffered, and been tried much already, yet, it may be, a greater meaſure is ſtill behind, which you are to fill up. "Be not high-minded, but fear." Our laſt trials, in all probability, will be the greateſt: and we can never ſay our warfare is accompliſhed, or our trials finiſhed, till we bow down our heads, and give up the ghoſt. "And it came to paſs, after theſe things, that GOD did tempt *Abraham*."

"GOD did tempt *Abraham*." But can the ſcripture contradict itſelf? Does not the apoſtle *James* tell us, "that GOD tempts no man;" and GOD does tempt no man to evil, or on purpoſe to draw him into ſin; for, when a man is thus tempted, he is drawn away of his own heart's luſt, and enticed. But in another ſenſe, GOD may be ſaid to tempt, I mean, to try his ſervants; and in this ſenſe we are to underſtand that paſſage of *Matthew*, where we are told, that, "JESUS was led up by the Spirit (the good Spirit) into the wilderneſs, to be tempted of the devil." And our LORD, in that excellent form of prayer which he has been pleaſed to give us, does not require us to pray that we may not abſo-

lutely be led into temptation, but delivered from the evil of it; whence we may plainly infer, that GOD ſees it fit ſometimes to lead us into temptation, that is, to bring us into ſuch circumſtances as will try our faith and other chriſtian graces. In this ſenſe we are to underſtand the expreſſion before us; "GOD did tempt or try *Abraham*."

How GOD was pleaſed to reveal his will at this time to his faithful ſervant, whether by the *Shechinah*, or divine appearance, or by a ſmall ſtill voice, as he ſpoke to *Elijah*, or by a whiſper, like that of the Spirit to *Philip*, when he commanded him to go join himſelf to the eunuch's chariot, we are not told, nor is it material to enquire. It is enough that we are informed, GOD ſaid unto him, *Abraham*; and that *Abraham* knew it was the voice of GOD: for he ſaid, "Behold, here I am." O what a holy familiarity (if I may ſo ſpeak) is there between GOD and thoſe holy ſouls that are united to him by faith in CHRIST JESUS! GOD ſays, *Abraham*; and *Abraham* ſaid (it ſhould ſeem without the leaſt ſurprize) Behold, here I am. Being reconciled to GOD by the death and obedience of CHRIST, which he rejoiced in, and ſaw by faith afar off; he did not, like guilty *Adam*, ſeek the trees of the garden to hide himſelf from, but takes pleaſure in converſing with GOD, and talketh with him, as a man talketh with his friend. O that CHRIST-leſs ſinners knew what it is to have fellowſhip with the Father and the Son! They would envy the happineſs of ſaints, and count it all joy to be termed enthuſiaſts and fools for CHRIST's ſake.

But what does GOD ſay to *Abraham*? Verſe 2. "Take now thy ſon, thine only ſon *Iſaac*, whom thou loveſt, and get thee into the land of *Moriah*, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I ſhall tell thee of."

Every word deſerves our particular obſervation. Whatever he was to do, he muſt do it now, immediately, without conferring with fleſh and blood. But what muſt he do? "Take now thy ſon." Had GOD ſaid, take now a firſtling, or choiceſt lamb or beaſt of thy flock, and offer it up for a burnt-offering, it would not have appeared ſo ghaſtly; but for GOD to ſay, "take now thy ſon, and offer him up for a burnt-offering," one would have imagined, was enough to ſtagger the ſtrongeſt

ſtrongeſt faith. But this is not all: it muſt not only be a ſon, but "thine only ſon *Iſaac*, whom thou loveſt." If it muſt be a ſon, and not a beaſt, that muſt be offered, why will not *Iſhmael* do, the ſon of the bond-woman? No, it muſt be his only ſon, the heir of all, his *Iſaac*, by interpretation *laughter*, the ſon of his old age, in whom his ſoul delighted, "whom thou loveſt," ſays GOD, in whoſe life his own was wrapped up: and this ſon, this only ſon, this *Iſaac*, the ſon of his love, muſt be taken now, even now, without delay, and be offered up by his own father, for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains of the which GOD would tell him.

Well might the apoſtle, ſpeaking of this man of GOD, ſay, that "againſt hope he believed in hope, and, being ſtrong in faith, gave glory to GOD:" For, had he not been bleſſed with faith which man never before had, he muſt have refuſed to comply with this ſevere command. For how many arguments might nature ſuggeſt, to prove that ſuch a command could never come from GOD, or to excuſe himſelf from obeying it? "What! (might the good man have ſaid) butcher "my own child! it is contrary to the very law of nature: "much more to butcher my dear ſon *Iſaac*, in whoſe ſeed "GOD himſelf has aſſured me of a numerous poſterity. But "ſuppoſing I could give up my own affections, and be willing to part with him, though I love him ſo dearly, yet, if "I murder him, what will become of GOD's promiſe? Beſides, I am now like a city built upon a hill; I ſhine as a "light in the world, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe "generation: How then ſhall I cauſe GOD's name to be blaſphemed, how ſhall I become a by-word among the heathen, "if they hear that I have committed a crime which they abhor! But, above all, what will *Sarah* my wife ſay? How "can I ever return to her again, after I have imbrued my "hands in my dear child's blood? O that GOD would pardon "me in this thing, or take my life in the place of my ſon's!" Thus, I ſay, *Abraham* might have argued, and that too ſeemingly with great reaſon, againſt complying with the divine command. But as before by faith he conſidered not the deadneſs of *Sarah*'s womb, when ſhe was paſt age, but believed on him, who ſaid, "*Sarah* thy wife ſhall bear thee a ſon indeed;"

ſo now, being convinced that the ſame GOD ſpoke to and commanded him to offer up that ſon, and knowing that GOD was able to raiſe him from the dead, without delay he obeys the heavenly call.

O that unbelievers would learn of faithful *Abraham*, and believe whatever is revealed from GOD, though they cannot fully comprehend it! *Abraham* knew GOD commanded him to offer up his ſon, and therefore believed, notwithſtanding carnal reaſoning might ſuggeſt many objections. We have ſufficient teſtimony, that GOD has ſpoken to us by his ſon; why ſhould we not alſo believe, though many things in the New Teſtament are above our reaſon? For, where reaſon ends, faith begins. And, however infidels may ſtile themſelves reaſoners, of all men they are the moſt unreaſonable: For, is it not contrary to all reaſon, to meaſure an infinite by a finite underſtanding, or think to find out the myſteries of godlineſs to perfection?

But to return to the patriarch *Abraham*: We obſerved before what plauſible objections he might have made; but he anſwered not a ſingle word: no, without replying againſt his Maker, we are told, verſe 3. that "*Abraham* roſe up early in the morning, and ſaddled his aſs, and took two of his young men with him, and *Iſaac* his ſon, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and roſe up and went unto the place of which God had told him."

From this verſe we may gather, that GOD ſpoke to *Abraham* in a dream, or viſion of the night: For it is ſaid, he roſe up early. Perhaps it was near the fourth watch of the night, juſt before break of day, when GOD ſaid, Take now thy ſon; and *Abraham* riſes up early to do ſo; as I doubt not but he uſed to riſe early to offer up his morning-ſacrifice of praiſe and thankſgiving. It is often remarked of people in the Old Teſtament, that they roſe early in the morning; and particularly of our LORD in the New, that he roſe a great while before day to pray. The morning befriends devotion; and, if people cannot uſe ſo much ſelf-denial as to riſe early to pray, I know not how they will be able to die at a ſtake (if called to it) for JESUS CHRIST.

The humility as well as the piety of the patriarch is obſervable: he ſaddled his own aſs (great men ſhould be humble;)

and

and to ſhew his ſincerity, though he took two of his young men with him, and *Iſaac* his ſon, yet he keeps his deſign as a ſecret from them all: nay, he does not ſo much as tell *Sarah* his wife: for he knew not but ſhe might be a ſnare unto him in this affair; and, as *Rebekah* afterwards, on another occaſion, adviſed *Jacob* to flee, ſo *Sarah* alſo might perſuade *Iſaac* to hide himſelf; or the young men, had they known of it, might have forced him away, as in after-ages the ſoldiers reſcued *Jonathan* out of the hands of *Saul*. But *Abraham* ſought no ſuch evaſion, and therefore, like an *Iſraelite* indeed, in whom there was no guile, he himſelf reſolutely "clave the wood for the burnt-offering, roſe up and went unto the place of which GOD had told him." In the ſecond verſe GOD commanded him to offer up his ſon upon one of the mountains which he would tell him of. He commanded him to offer his ſon up, but would not then directly tell him the place where: this was to keep him dependent and watching unto prayer: for there is nothing like being kept waiting upon GOD; and, if we do, aſſuredly GOD will reveal himſelf unto us yet further in his own time. Let us practiſe what we know, follow providence ſo far as we can ſee already; and what we know not, what we ſee not as yet, let us only be found in the way of duty, and the LORD will reveal even that unto us. *Abraham* knew not directly where he was to offer up his ſon; but he riſes up and ſets forward, and behold now GOD ſhews him: "And he went to the place of which GOD had told him." Let us go and do likewiſe.

Verſe 4. "Then on the third day *Abraham* lifted up his eyes, and ſaw the place afar off."

So that the place, of which GOD had told him, was no leſs than three days journey diſtant from the place where GOD firſt appeared to him, and commanded him to take his ſon. Was not this to try his faith, and to let him ſee that what he did, was not meerly from a ſudden pang of devotion, but a matter of choice and deliberation? But who can tell what the aged patriarch felt during theſe three days? Strong as he was in faith, I am perſuaded his bowels often yearned over his dear ſon *Iſaac*. Methinks I ſee the good old man walking with his dear child in his hand, and now and then looking upon him, loving him, and then turning aſide to weep. And perhaps,

haps, ſometimes he ſtays a little behind to pour out his heart before GOD, for he had no mortal to tell his caſe to. Then, methinks, I ſee him join his ſon and ſervants again, and talking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of GOD, as they walked by the way. At length, "on the third day, he lifts up his eyes, and ſaw the place afar off." And, to ſhew that he was yet ſincerely reſolved to do whatſoever the LORD required of him, he even now will not diſcover his deſign to his ſervants, but "ſaid, verſe 5. to his young men," (as we ſhould ſay to our worldly thoughts, when about to tread the courts of the LORD's houſe) "Abide you here with the aſs; and I and the lad will go up yonder and worſhip, and come again to you." This was a ſufficient reaſon for their ſtaying behind; and, it being their maſter's cuſtom to go frequently to worſhip, they could have no ſuſpicion of what he was going about. And by *Abraham*'s ſaying, that he and the lad would come again, I am apt to think he believed GOD would raiſe him from the dead, if ſo be he permitted him to offer his child up for a burnt-offering. However that be, he is yet reſolved to obey GOD to the uttermoſt; and therefore,

Verſe 6. "*Abraham* took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon *Iſaac* his ſon; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and they went both of them together." Little did *Iſaac* think that he was to be offered on that very wood which he was carrying upon his ſhoulders; and therefore *Iſaac* innocently, and with a holy freedom (for good men ſhould not keep their children at too great a diſtance) "ſpake unto *Abraham* his father, and ſaid, My father; and he (with equal affection and holy condeſcenſion) ſaid, Here am I, my ſon." And to ſhew how careful *Abraham* had been (as all chriſtian parents ought to be) to inſtruct his *Iſaac* how to ſacrifice to GOD, like a youth trained up in the way wherein he ſhould go; *Iſaac* ſaid, "Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" How beautiful is early piety! how amiable, to hear young people aſk queſtions about ſacrificing to GOD in an acceptable way! *Iſaac* knew very well that a lamb was wanting, and that a lamb was neceſſary for a proper ſacrifice: "Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" Young men and maidens, learn of him.

Hitherto,

Hitherto, it is plain, *Iſaac* knew nothing of his father's deſign: but I believe, by what his father ſaid in anſwer to his queſtion, that now was the time *Abraham* revealed it unto him.

Ver. 8. "And *Abraham* ſaid, My ſon, GOD will provide himſelf a Lamb for a burnt-offering." Some think, that *Abraham* by faith ſaw the LORD JESUS afar off, and here ſpake prophetically of that Lamb of GOD already ſlain in decree, and hereafter to be actually offered up for ſinners. This was a lamb of GOD's providing indeed (we dared not have thought of it) to ſatisfy his own juſtice, and to render him juſt in juſtifying the ungodly. What is all our fire and wood, the beſt preparation and performances we can make or preſent, unleſs GOD had provided himſelf this Lamb for a burnt-offering? He could not away with them. The words will well bear this interpretation. But, whatever *Abraham* might intend, I cannot but think he here made an application, and acquainted his ſon, of GOD's dealing with his ſoul; and at length, with tears in his eyes, and the utmoſt affection in his heart, cried out, "Thou art to be the lamb, my Son;" GOD has commanded me to provide thee for a burnt-offering, and to offer thee upon the mountain which we are now aſcending. And, as it appears from a ſubſequent verſe, *Iſaac*, convinced that it was the divine will, made no reſiſtance at all: For it is ſaid, "They went both of them together;" and again, when we are told, that *Abraham* bound *Iſaac*, we do not hear of his complaining, or endeavouring to eſcape, which he might have done, being (as ſome think) near thirty years of age, and, it is plain, capable of carrying wood enough for a burnt-offering. But he was partaker of the like precious faith with his aged father, and therefore is as willing to be offered, as *Abraham* is to offer him: And "ſo they went both of them together."

Ver. 9. At length "they came to the place of which GOD had told *Abraham*. He built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound *Iſaac* his ſon, and laid him on the altar upon the wood."

And here let us pauſe a while, and by faith take a view of the place where the father has laid him. I doubt not but the bleſſed angels hovered round the altar, and ſang, "Glory be to GOD in the higheſt," for giving ſuch faith to man.

Come,

Come, all ye tender-hearted parents, who know what it is to look over a dying child: fancy that you ſaw the altar erected before you, and the wood laid in order, and the belove *Iſaac* bound upon it: fancy that you ſaw the aged parent ſtanding by weeping. (For, why may we not ſuppoſe that *Abraham* wept, ſince JESUS himſelf wept at the grave of *Lazarus?*) O what pious, endearing expreſſions paſſed now alternately between the father and the ſon! *Joſephus* records a pathetic ſpeech made by each, whether genuine I know not: but methinks I ſee the tears trickle down the Patriarch *Abraham*'s cheeks; and out of the abundance of the heart, he cries, Adieu, adieu, my ſon; the LORD gave thee to me, and the LORD calls thee away; bleſſed be the name of the LORD: adieu, my *Iſaac*, my only ſon, whom I love as my own ſoul; adieu, adieu. I ſee *Iſaac* at the ſame time meekly reſigning himſelf into his heavenly Father's hands, and praying to the moſt High to ſtrengthen his earthly parent to ſtrike the ſtroke. But why do I attempt to deſcribe what either ſon or father felt? It is impoſſible: we may indeed form ſome faint idea of, but ſhall never fully comprehend it, till we come and ſit down with them in the kingdom of heaven, and hear them tell the pleaſing ſtory over again. Haſten, O LORD, that bleſſed time! O let thy kingdom come!

And now, the fatal blow is going to be given. "And *Abraham* ſtretched forth his hand, and took the knife to ſlay his ſon." But do you not think he intended to turn away his head, when he gave the blow? Nay, why may we not ſuppoſe he ſometimes drew his hand in, after it was ſtretched out, willing to take another laſt farewell of his beloved *Iſaac*, and deſirous to defer it a little, though reſolved at laſt to ſtrike home? Be that as it will, his arm is now ſtretched out, the knife is in his hand, and he is about to put it to his dear ſon's throat.

But ſing, O heavens! and rejoice, O earth! Man's extremity is GOD's opportunity: for behold, juſt as the knife, in all probability, was near his throat, ver. 11. "the angel of the LORD, (or rather the LORD of angels, JESUS CHRIST, the angel of the everlaſting covenant) called unto him, (probably in a very audible manner) from heaven, and ſaid, *Abraham*, *Abraham*. (The word is doubled,

to

to engage his attention; and perhaps the ſuddenneſs of the call made him draw back his hand, juſt as he was going to ſtrike his ſon.) And *Abraham* ſaid, Here am I."

"And he ſaid, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now know I that thou feareſt GOD, ſeeing thou haſt not withheld thy ſon, thine only ſon from me."

Here then it was that *Abraham* received his ſon *Iſaac* from the dead in a figure. He was in effect offered upon the altar, and GOD looked upon him as offered and given unto him. Now it was that *Abraham*'s faith, being tried, was found more precious than gold purified ſeven times in the fire. Now as a reward of grace, though not of debt, for this ſignal act of obedience, by an oath, GOD gives and confirms the promiſe, "that in his ſeed all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed," ver. 17, 18. With what comfort may we ſuppoſe the good old man and his ſon went down from the mount, and returned unto the young men! With what joy may we imagine he went home, and related all that had paſſed to *Sarah!* And above all, with what triumph is he now exulting in the paradiſe of GOD, and adoring rich, free, diſtinguiſhing, electing, everlaſting love, which alone made him to differ from the reſt of mankind, and rendered him worthy of that title which he will have ſo long as the ſun and the moon endure, "The Father of the faithful!"

But let us now draw our eyes from the creature, and do what *Abraham*, if he was preſent, would direct to; I mean, fix them on the Creator, GOD bleſſed for evermore.

I ſee your hearts affected, I ſee your eyes weep. (And indeed, who can refrain weeping at the relation of ſuch a ſtory?) But, behold, I ſhew you a myſtery, hid under the ſacrifice of *Abraham*'s only ſon, which, unleſs your hearts are hardned, muſt cauſe you to weep tears of love, and that plentifully too. I would willingly hope you even prevent me here, and are ready to ſay, "It is the love of GOD, in giving JESUS CHRIST to die for our ſins." Yes; that is it. And yet perhaps you find your hearts, at the mentioning of this, not ſo much affected. Let this convince you, that we are all fallen creatures, and that we do not love GOD or CHRIST as we ought to do: for, if you admire *Abraham* offering up

his

his *Iſaac*, how much more ought you to extol, magnify and adore the love of GOD, who ſo loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son CHRIST JESUS our LORD, "that whoſoever believeth on Him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life?" May we not well cry out, Now know we, O LORD, that thou haſt loved us, ſince thou haſt not withheld thy Son, thine only Son from us? *Abraham* was GOD's creature (and GOD was *Abraham*'s friend) and therefore under the higheſt obligation to ſurrender up his *Iſaac*. But O ſtupendious love! whilſt we were his enemies, GOD ſent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might become a curſe for us. O the freeneſs, as well as the infinity, of the love of GOD our Father! It is unſearchable: I am loſt in contemplating it; it is paſt finding out. Think, O believers, think of the love of GOD, in giving JESUS CHRIST to be a propitiation for our ſins. And when you hear how *Abraham* built an altar, and laid the wood in order, and bound *Iſaac* his ſon, and laid him on the altar upon the wood; think how your heavenly Father bound JESUS CHRIST his only Son, and offered him upon the altar of his juſtice, and laid upon him the iniquities of us all. When you read of *Abraham*'s ſtretching forth his hand to ſlay his Son, Think, O think, how GOD actually ſuffered his Son to be ſlain, that we might live for evermore. Do you read of *Iſaac* carrying the wood upon his ſhoulders, upon which he was to be offered? Let this lead you to mount *Calvary* (this very mount of *Moriah* where *Iſaac* was offered, as ſome think) and take a view of the antitype JESUS CHRIST, the Son of GOD, bearing and ready to ſink under the weight of that croſs, on which he was to hang for us. Do you admire *Iſaac* ſo freely conſenting to die, though a creature, and therefore obliged to go when GOD called? O do not forget to admire infinitely more the dear LORD JESUS, that promiſed ſeed, who willingly ſaid, "Lo, I come," though under no obligation ſo to do, "to do thy will," to obey and die for men, "O GOD!" Did you weep juſt now, when I bid you fancy you ſaw the altar, and the wood laid in order, and *Iſaac* laid bound on the altar? Look by faith, behold the bleſſed JESUS, our all-glorious *Emmanuel*, not bound, but nailed on an accurſed tree: ſee how he hangs crowned with thorns,

thorns, and had in deriſion of all that are round about him: ſee how the thorns pierce him, and how the blood in purple ſtreams trickle down his ſacred temples! Hark how the GOD of nature groans! See how he bows his head, and at length humanity gives up the ghoſt! *Iſaac* is ſaved, but JESUS, the GOD of *Iſaac*, dies: A ram is offered up in *Iſaac's* room, but JESUS has no ſubſtitute; JESUS muſt bleed, JESUS muſt die; GOD the Father provided this Lamb for himſelf from all eternity. He muſt be offered in time, or man muſt be damned for evermore. And now, where are your tears? Shall I ſay, refrain your voice from weeping? No; rather let me exhort you to look to him whom you have pierced, and mourn, as a woman mourneth for her firſt-born: for we have been the betrayers, we have been the murderers of this LORD of glory; and ſhall we not bewail thoſe ſins, which brought the bleſſed JESUS to the accurſed tree? Having ſo much done, ſo much ſuffered for us, ſo much forgiven, ſhall we not love much? O! let us love Him with all our hearts, and minds, and ſtrength, and glorify him in our ſouls and bodies, for they are his. Which leads me to a ſecond inference I ſhall draw from the foregoing diſcourſe.

From hence we may learn the nature of true, juſtifying faith. Whoever underſtands and preaches the truth, as it is in JESUS, muſt acknowledge, that ſalvation is GOD's free gift, and that we are ſaved, not by any or all the works of righteouſneſs which we have done or can do: no; we can neither wholly nor in part juſtify ourſelves in the ſight of GOD. The LORD JESUS CHRIST is our righteouſneſs; and if we are accepted with GOD, it muſt be only in and through the perſonal righteouſneſs, the active and paſſive obedience, of JESUS CHRIST his beloved Son. This righteouſneſs muſt be imputed, or counted over to us, and applied by faith to our hearts, or elſe we can in no wiſe be juſtified in GOD's ſight: and that very moment a ſinner is enabled to lay hold on CHRIST's righteouſneſs by faith, he is freely juſtified from all his ſins, and ſhall never enter into condemnation, notwithſtanding he was a fire-brand of hell before. Thus it was that *Abraham* was juſtified before he did any good work: he was enabled to believe on the LORD CHRIST; it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs; that is, CHRIST's righte-

ouſneſs was made over to him, and ſo accounted his. This this is goſpel; this is the only way of finding acceptance wit GOD: good works have nothing to do with our juſtificatio in his ſight. We are juſtified by faith alone, as faith th article of our church; agreeable to which the apoſtle *Pau* ſays, "By grace ye are ſaved, through faith; and that no of yourſelves; it is the gift of GOD." Notwithſtanding, good works have their proper place: they juſtify our faith, though not our perſons; they follow it, and evidence our juſtification in the ſight of men. Hence it is that the apoſtle *James* aſks, was not *Abraham* juſtified by works? (alluding no doubt to the ſtory on which we have been diſcourſing) tha is, did he not prove he was in a juſtified ſtate, becauſe hi faith was productive of good works? This declarative juſtification in the ſight of men, is what is directly to be underſtood in the words of the text; "Now know I, ſays GOD, that thou feareſt me, ſince thou haſt not withheld thy Son thine only Son from me." Not but that GOD knew it before; but this is ſpoken in condeſcenſion to our weak capacities, and plainly ſhews, that his offering up his ſon wa accepted with GOD, as an evidence of the ſincerity of hi faith, and for this, was left on record to future ages. Hence then you may learn, whether you are bleſſed with, and are ſon and daughters of, faithful *Abraham*. You ſay you believe you talk of free grace and free juſtification: you do well, the devils alſo believe and tremble. But has the faith, which you pretend to, influenced your hearts, renewed your ſouls and, like *Abraham's*, worked by love? Are your affections like his, ſet on things above? Are you heavenly-minded, an like him, do you confeſs yourſelves ſtrangers and pilgrims o the earth? In ſhort, has your faith enabled you to overcom the world, and ſtrengthned you to give up your *Iſaacs*, you laughter, your moſt beloved luſts, friends, pleaſures, an profits for GOD? If ſo, take the comfort of it; for juſtly ma you ſay, "We know aſſuredly, that we do fear and lov "GOD, or rather are loved of him." But if you are onl talking believers, have only a faith of the head, and neve felt the power of it in your hearts, however you may boaſt yourſelves up, and ſay, "We have *Abraham* for our father "or CHRIST is our Saviour;" unleſs you get a faith of th heart

heart, a faith working by love, you ſhall never ſit with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, or JESUS CHRIST, in the kingdom of heaven.

But I muſt draw one more inference, and with that I ſhall conclude.

Learn, O ſaints! from what has been ſaid, to ſit looſe to all your worldly comforts; and ſtand ready prepared to part with every thing, when GOD ſhall require it at your hand. Some of you perhaps may have friends, who are to you as your own ſouls; and others may have children, in whoſe lives your own lives are bound up: all I believe have their *Iſaacs*, their particular delights of ſome kind or other. Labour, for CHRIST's ſake, labour, ye ſons and daughters of *Abraham*, to reſign them daily in affection to GOD, that, when he ſhall require you really to ſacrifice them, you may not conſer with fleſh and blood, any more than the bleſſed patriarch now before us. And as for you that have been in any meaſure tried like unto him, let his example encourage and comfort you. Remember, *Abraham* your father was tried ſo before you: think, O think of the happineſs he now enjoys, and how he is inceſſantly thanking GOD for tempting and trying him when here below. Look up often by the eye of faith, and ſee him ſitting with his dearly beloved *Iſaac* in the world of ſpirits. Remember, it will be but a little while, and you ſhall ſit with them alſo, and tell one another what GOD has done for your ſouls. There I hope to ſit with you, and hear this ſtory of his offering up his ſon from his own mouth, and to praiſe the Lamb that ſitteth upon the throne, for what he hath done for all our ſouls, for ever and ever.

SERMON IV.

The great Duty of Family-Religion.

JOSHUA xxiv. 15.

As for me and my House, we will serve the LORD.

THESE words contain the holy resolution of pious *Joshua*, who having in a most moving, affectionate discourse recounted to the *Israelites* what great things GOD had done for them; in the verse immediately preceding the text, comes to draw a proper inference from what he had been delivering; and acquaints them, in the most pressing terms, that since GOD had been so exceeding gracious unto them, they could do no less, than out of gratitude for such uncommon favours and mercies, dedicate both themselves and families to his service. "Now therefore, fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and truth, and put away the GODS which your fathers served on the other side of the flood." And by the same engaging motive does the prophet *Samuel* afterwards enforce their obedience to the commandments of GOD, 1 *Sam.* xii. 24. "Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth, with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you." But then, that they might not excuse themselves (as too many might be apt to do) by his giving them a bad example, or think he was laying heavy burdens upon them, whilst he himself touched them not with one of his fingers, he tells them in the text, that whatever regard they might pay to the doctrine he had been preaching, yet he (as all ministers ought to do) was resolved to live up to and practise it himself: "Chuse you therefore, whom you will serve, whether the GODS which your fathers served, or the GODS of the *Amorites*, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

A reso-

A reſolution this, worthy of *Joſhua*, and no leſs becoming, no leſs neceſſary for every true ſon of *Joſhua*, that is intruſted with the care and government of a family in our day: and, if it was ever ſeaſonable for miniſters to preach up, or people to put in practice *family-religion*, it was never more ſo than in the preſent age; ſince it is greatly to be feared, that out of thoſe many houſholds that call themſelves chriſtians, there are but few that ſerve GOD in their reſpective families as they ought.

It is true indeed, viſit our churches, and you may perhaps ſee ſomething of the *form of godlineſs* ſtill ſubſiſting amongſt us; but even that is ſcarcely to be met with in private houſes. So that were the bleſſed angels to come, as in the patriarchal age, and obſerve our ſpiritual oeconomy at home, would they not be tempted to ſay as *Abraham* to *Abimelech*, "Surely, the fear of GOD is not in this place!" *Gen.* xx. 11.

How ſuch a general neglect of family-religion firſt began to overſpread the chriſtian world, is difficult to determine. As for the primitive chriſtians, I am poſitive it was not ſo with them: No, they had not ſo learned CHRIST, as falſely to imagine religion was to be confined ſolely to their aſſemblies for public worſhip; but, on the contrary, behaved with ſuch piety and exemplary holineſs in their private families, that St. *Paul* often ſtyles their houſe a church; "Salute ſuch a one, ſays he, and the church which is in his houſe." And, I believe, we muſt for ever deſpair of ſeeing a primitive ſpirit of piety revived in the world, till we are ſo happy as to ſee a revival of primitive family religion; and perſons unanimouſly reſolving with good old *Joſhua*, in the words of the text, "As for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the LORD."

From which words, I ſhall beg leave to inſiſt on theſe three things.

I. *Firſt*, That it is the duty of every governor of a family to take care, that not only he himſelf, but alſo that thoſe committed to his charge, "*ſerve the* LORD."

II. *Secondly*, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew after what manner a governor and his houſhold ought to ſerve the LORD. And,

III. *Thirdly*, I shall offer some motives, in order to excite all governors, with their respective households, to serve the Lord in the manner that shall be recommended.

And *First*, I am to shew that it is the duty of every governor of a family to take care, that not only he himself, but also that those committed to his charge, should serve the Lord.

And this will appear, if we consider that every governor of a family ought to look upon himself as obliged to act in three capacities: as a prophet, to instruct; as a priest, to pray for and with; as a king, to govern, direct, and provide for them. It is true indeed, the latter of these, their Kingly office, they are not so frequently deficient in, (nay in this they are generally too solicitous;) but as for the two former, their priestly and prophetic office, like *Gallio*, they care for no such things. But however indifferent some governors may be about it, they may be assured, that God will require a due discharge of these offices as their hands. For if, as the apostle argues, "He that does not provide for his own house," in temporal things, "has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel;" to what greater degree of apostasy must he have arrived, who takes no thought to provide for the spiritual welfare of his family!

But farther, persons are generally very liberal of their invectives against the clergy, and think they justly blame the conduct of that minister who does not take heed to and watch over the flock, of which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer: but may not every governor of a family, be in a lower degree liable to the same censure, who takes no thought for those souls that are committed to his charge? For every house is as it were a little parish, every governor (as was before observed) a priest, every family a flock: and if any of them perish through the governor's neglect, their blood will God require at their hands.

Was a minister to disregard teaching his people publicly, and from house to house, and to excuse himself by saying, that he had enough to do to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, without concerning himself with that of others; would you not be apt to think such a minister, to

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be like the unjuſt judge, "One that neither feared GOD, nor regarded man?" And yet, odious as ſuch a character would be, it is no worſe than that governor of a family deſerves, who thinks himſelf obliged only to ſave his own ſoul, without paying any regard to the ſouls of his houſhold. For (as was above hinted) every houſe is as it were a pariſh, and every maſter is concerned to ſecure, as much as in him lies, the ſpiritual proſperity of every one under his roof, as any miniſter whatever is obliged to look to the ſpiritual welfare of every individual perſon under his charge.

What precedents men who neglect their duty in this particular, can plead for ſuch omiſſion, I cannot tell. Doubtleſs not the example of holy *Job*, who was ſo far from imagining that he had no concern, as governor of a family, with any one's ſoul but his own, that the ſcripture acquaints us, "When the days of his childrens feaſting were gone about, that *Job* ſent and ſanctified them, and offered burnt-offerings, according to the number of them all; for *Job* ſaid, It may be that my ſons have ſinned and curſed GOD in their hearts: thus did *Job* continually." Nor can they plead the practice of good old *Joſhua*, whom, in the text, we find as much concerned for his houſhold's welfare, as his own. Nor laſtly, that of *Cornelius*, who feared GOD, not only himſelf, but with all his houſe: and were chriſtians but of the ſame ſpirit of *Job*, *Joſhua*, and the *Gentile* centurion, they would act as *Job*, *Joſhua*, and *Cornelius* did.

But alas! if this be the caſe, and all governors of families ought not only to ſerve the LORD themſelves, but likewiſe to ſee that their reſpective houſholds do ſo too; what will then become of thoſe who not only neglect ſerving GOD themſelves, but alſo make it their buſineſs to ridicule and ſcoff at any of their houſe that do? Who are not content with "not entering into the kingdom of heaven themſelves; but thoſe alſo that are willing to enter in, they hinder." Surely ſuch men are factors for the devil indeed. Surely their damnation ſlumbereth not: for although GOD, in his good providence, may ſuffer ſuch ſtumbling-blocks to be put in his childrens way, and ſuffer their greateſt enemies to be thoſe of their own houſholds, for a trial of their ſincerity, and improvement of their faith; yet we cannot but pronounce a woe againſt thoſe

maſters by whom ſuch offences come. For if thoſe that only take care of their own ſouls, can ſcarcely be ſaved, where will ſuch monſtrous profane and wicked governors appear?

But hoping there are but few of this unhappy ſtamp, proceed we now to the

Second thing propoſed; To ſhew after what manner a governor and his houſhold ought to ſerve the LORD.

II. And the firſt thing I ſhall mention is, *reading the word of* GOD. This is a duty incumbent on every private perſon. "Search the ſcriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life," is a precept given by our bleſſed LORD indifferently to all: but much more ſo, ought every governor of a family to think it in a peculiar manner ſpoken to himſelf, becauſe (as hath been already proved) he ought to look upon himſelf as a prophet, and therefore, agreeably to ſuch a character, bound to inſtruct thoſe under his charge in the knowledge of the word of GOD.

This we find was the order GOD gave to his peculiar people *Iſrael*: for thus ſpeaks his repreſentative *Moſes*, *Deut.* vi. 6, 7. "Theſe words," that is, the ſcripture words, "which I command thee this day, ſhall be in thy heart, and thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy children," that is, as it is generally explained, ſervants, as well as children, "and ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thy houſe." From whence we may infer, that the only reaſon, why ſo many neglect to read the words of ſcripture diligently to their children is, becauſe the words of ſcripture are not in their hearts; for if they were, out of the abundance of the heart their mouth would ſpeak.

Beſides, ſervants as well as children, are, for the generality very ignorant, and mere novices in the laws of GOD: and how ſhall they know, unleſs ſome one teach them? And what more proper to teach them by, than the lively oracles of GOD "which are able to make them wiſe unto ſalvation?" And who more proper to inſtruct them by theſe lively oracles, than parents and maſters, who (as hath been more than once obſerved) are as much concerned to feed them with ſpiritual, as with bodily bread, day by day.

But if these things be so, what a miserable condition are those unhappy governors in, who are so far from feeding those committed to their care with the sincere milk of the word, to the intent they may grow thereby, that they neither search the scriptures themselves, nor are careful to explain them to others? Such families must be in a happy way indeed to do their Master's will, who take such prodigious pains to know it! Would not one imagine that they had turned converts to the Church of *Rome*, that they thought ignorance to be the mother of devotion, and that those were to be condemned as heretics who read their Bibles! And yet how few families are there amongst us, who do not act after this unseemly manner! But shall I praise them in this? I praise them not: Brethren, this thing ought not so to be.

2. Pass we on now to the second means whereby every governor and his household ought to serve the LORD, *family-prayer*.

This is a duty, though as much neglected, yet as absolutely necessary as the former. Reading is a good preparative for prayer, as prayer is an excellent means to render reading effectual. And the reason why every governor of a family should join both these exercises together, is plain, because a governor of a family cannot perform his priestly office (which we before observed he is in some degree invested with) without performing this duty of family prayer.

We find it therefore remarked, when mention is made of *Cain* and *Abel*'s offering sacrifices, that they brought them. But to whom did they bring them? Why, in all probability, to their father *Adam*, who, as priest of the family, was to offer sacrifice in their names. And so ought every spiritual son of the second *Adam*, who is entrusted with the care of an household, to offer up the spiritual sacrifices of supplications and thanksgivings, acceptable to GOD through JESUS CHRIST, in the presence and name of all who wait upon, or eat meat at his table.

Thus we read our blessed LORD behaved, when he tabernacled amongst us: for it is said often, that he prayed with his twelve disciples, which was then his little family. And he himself has promised a particular blessing to joint supplications: "Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name,

name, there am I in the midſt of them." And again, "If two or three are agreed touching any thing they ſhall aſk, it ſhall be given them." Add to this, that we are commanded by the Apoſtle to "pray always, with all manner of ſupplication," which doubtleſs includes family prayer. And holy *Joſhua*, when he ſet up the good reſolution in the text, that he and his houſhold would ſerve the LORD, certainly reſolved to pray with his family, which is one of the beſt teſtimonies they could give of their ſerving him.

Beſides, there are no families but what have ſome common bleſſings, of which they have been all partakers, to give thanks for; ſome common croſſes and afflictions, which they are to pray againſt; ſome common ſins, which they are all to lament and bewail: but how this can be done, without joining together in one common act of humiliation, ſupplication, and thankſgiving, is difficult to deviſe.

From all which conſiderations put together, it is evident, that family prayer is a great and neceſſary duty; and conſequently, thoſe governors that neglect it, are certainly without excuſe. And it is much to be feared, if they live without family prayer, they live without GOD in the world.

And yet, ſuch an hateful character as this is, it is to be feared, that was GOD to ſend out an angel to deſtroy us, as he did once to deſtroy the *Egyptian* firſt-born, and withal give him a commiſſion, as then, to ſpare no houſes but where they ſaw the blood of the lintel, ſprinkled on the door-poſt, ſo now, to let no families eſcape, but thoſe that called upon him in morning and evening prayer; few would remain unhurt by his avenging ſword. Shall I term ſuch families chriſtians or heathens? Doubtleſs they deſerve not the name of chriſtians; and heathens will riſe up in judgment againſt ſuch profane families of this generation: for they had always their houſhold gods, whom they worſhipped, and whoſe aſſiſtance they frequently invoked. And a pretty paſs thoſe families ſurely are arrived at, who muſt be ſent to ſchool to pagans. But will not the LORD be avenged on ſuch profane houſholds as theſe? Will he not pour out his fury upon thoſe that call not upon his name?

3. But it is time for me to haſten to the third and laſt means I ſhall recommend, whereby every governor ought with his houſhold to ſerve the LORD, *catechizing* and *inſtruct-*

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ing their children and ſervants, and bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD.

That this, as well as the two former, is a duty incumbent on every governor of an houſe, appears from that famous encomium or commendation GOD gives of *Abraham*: "I know that he will command his children and his houſhold after him, to keep the way of the LORD, to do juſtice and judgment." And indeed ſcarce any thing is more frequently preſſed upon us in holy writ, than this duty of catechiſing. Thus, ſays GOD in a paſſage before cited, "Thou ſhalt teach theſe words diligently unto thy children." And parents are commanded in the New Teſtament, to "breed up their children in the nurture and admonition of the LORD." The holy Pſalmiſt acquaints us, that one great end why GOD did ſuch great wonders for his people, was, "to the intent that when they grew up, they ſhould ſhew their children, or ſervants, the ſame." And in *Deut.* vi. at the 20th and following verſes, GOD ſtrictly commands his people to inſtruct their children in the true nature of the ceremonial worſhip, when they ſhould enquire about it, as he ſuppoſed they would do, in time to come. And if ſervants and children were to be inſtructed in the nature of *Jewiſh* rites, much more ought they now to be initiated and grounded in the doctrines and firſt principles of the goſpel of CHRIST: not only, becauſe it is a revelation, which has brought life and immortality to a fuller and clearer light, but alſo, becauſe many ſeducers are gone abroad into the world, who do their utmoſt endeavour to deſtroy not only the ſuperſtructure, but likewiſe to ſap the very foundation of our moſt holy religion.

Would then the preſent generation have their poſterity be true lovers and honourers of GOD; maſters and parents muſt take *Solomon*'s good advice, and train up and catechiſe their reſpective houſholds in the way wherein they ſhould go.

I am aware but of one objection, that can, with any ſhew of reaſon, be urged againſt what has been advanced; which is, that ſuch a procedure as this will take up too much time, and hinder families too long from their worldly buſineſs. But it is much to be queſtioned, whether perſons that ſtart ſuch an objection, are not of the ſame hypocritical ſpirit as the traitor *Judas*, who had indignation againſt devout *Mary*,

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for being ſo profuſe of her ointment, in anointing our bleſſed LORD, and aſked why it might not be ſold for two hundred pence, and given to the poor. For has GOD given us ſo much time to work for ourſelves, and ſhall we not allow ſome ſmall pittance of it, morning and evening, to be devoted to his more immediate worſhip and ſervice? Have not people read, that it is GOD who gives men power to get wealth, and therefore that the beſt way to proſper in the world, is to ſecure his favour? And has not our bleſſed LORD himſelf promiſed, that if we ſeek firſt the kingdom of GOD and his righteouſneſs, all outward neceſſaries ſhall be added unto us? *Abraham*, no doubt, was a man of as great buſineſs as ſuch objectors may be; but yet he would find time to command his houſhold to ſerve the LORD. Nay, *David* was a king, and conſequently had a great deal of buſineſs upon his hands; yet notwithſtanding, he profeſſes that he would walk in his houſe with a perfect heart. And, to inſtance but one more, holy *Joſhua* was a perſon certainly engaged very much in temporal affairs; and yet he ſolemnly declares, before all *Iſrael*, that as for him and his houſhold, they would ſerve the LORD. And did perſons but redeem their time, as *Abraham*, *David*, or *Joſhua* did, they would no longer complain, that family duties kept them too long from the buſineſs of the world.

III. But my Third and Laſt general head, under which I was to offer ſome motives, in order to excite all governors, with their reſpective houſholds, to ſerve the LORD in the manner before recommended, I hope, will ſerve inſtead of a thouſand arguments, to prove the weakneſs and folly of any ſuch objection.

1. And the firſt motive I ſhall mention is the duty of *gratitude*, which you that are governors of families owe to GOD. Your lot, every one muſt confeſs, is caſt in a fair ground: providence hath given you a goodly heritage, above many of your fellow-creatures; and therefore, out of a principle of gratitude, you ought to endeavour, as much as in you lies, to make every perſon of your reſpective houſholds to call upon him as long as they live: not to mention, that the authority, with which GOD has inveſted you as parents and governors of families, is a talent committed to your truſt, and which you

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are bound to improve to your Maſter's honour. In other things we find governors and parents can exerciſe lordſhip over their children and ſervants readily, and frequently enough can ſay to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; to a third, Do this, and he doeth it. And ſhall this power be ſo often employed in your own affairs, and never exerted in the things of GOD? Be aſtoniſhed, O heavens, at this!

Thus did not faithful *Abraham*; no, GOD ſays, that he knew *Abraham* would command his ſervants and children after him. Thus did not *Joſhua*: no, he was reſolved not only to walk with GOD himſelf, but to improve his authority in making all about him do ſo too: "As for me and my houſhold, we will ſerve the LORD." Let us go and *do likewiſe*.

2. But *Secondly*, If gratitude to GOD will not, methinks love and pity to your children ſhould move you, with your reſpective families, to ſerve the LORD.

Moſt people expreſs a great fondneſs for their children: nay ſo great, that very often their own lives are wrapped up in thoſe of their offspring. "Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb?" ſays GOD by his Prophet *Iſaiah*. He ſpeaks of it as a monſtrous thing, and ſcarce credible; but the words immediately following, affirm it to be poſſible, "Yea, they may forget:" and experience alſo aſſures us they may. Father and mother may both forſake their children: for what greater degree of forgetfulneſs can they expreſs towards them, than to neglect the improvement of their better part, and not bring them up in the knowledge and fear of GOD?

It is true indeed, parents ſeldom forget to provide for their childrens bodies, (though, it is to be feared, ſome men are ſo far ſunk beneath the beaſts that periſh, as to neglect even that) but then how often do they forget, or rather, when do they remember, to ſecure the ſalvation of their immortal ſouls? But is this their way of expreſſing their fondneſs for the fruit of their bodies? Is this the beſt teſtimony they can give of their affection to the darling of their hearts? Then was *Dalilah* fond of *Samſon*, when ſhe delivered him up into the hands of the *Philiſtines*: then were thoſe ruffians well affected to *Daniel*, when they threw him into a den of lions.

3. But *Thirdly*, If neither gratitude to GOD, nor love and pity to your children, will prevail on you; yet let a principle of *common honesty* and *justice* move you to set up the holy resolution in the text.

This is a principle which all men would be thought to act upon. But certainly, if any may be truly censured for their injustice, none can be more liable to such censure, than those who think themselves injured if their servants withdraw themselves from their bodily work, and yet they in return take no care of their inestimable souls. For is it just that servants should spend their time and strength in their master's service, and masters not at the same time give them what is just and equal for their service?

It is true, some men may think they have done enough when they give unto their servants food and raiment, and say, "Did not I bargain with thee for so much a year?" But if they give them no other reward than this, what do they less for their very beasts? But are not servants better than they? Doubtless they are: and however masters may put off their convictions for the present, they will find a time will come, when they shall know they ought to have given them some spiritual as well as temporal wages; and the cry of those that have mowed down their fields, will enter into the ears of the the LORD of Sabaoth.

4. But *Fourthly*, If neither gratitude to GOD, pity to children, nor a principle of common justice to servants, are sufficient to balance all objections; yet let that darling, that prevailing motive of *self-interest* turn the scale, and engage you with your respective households to serve the LORD.

This weighs greatly with you in other matters: be then persuaded to let it have a due and full influence on you in this: and if it has, if you have but faith as a grain of mustard-seed, how can you avoid believing, that promoting family-religion, will be the best means to promote your own temporal, as well as eternal welfare? For "Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come."

Besides, you all, doubtless, wish for honest servants, and pious children: and to have them prove otherwise, would be as great a grief to you, as it was to *Elisha* to have a treacherous

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Gehazi, or *David* to be troubled with a rebellious *Abſalom*. But how can it be expected they ſhould learn their duty, except thoſe ſet over them, take care to teach it to them? Is it not as reaſonable to expect you ſhould reap where you had not ſown, or gather where you had not ſtrawed?

Did chriſtianity, indeed, give any countenance to children and ſervants to diſregard their parents and maſters according to the fleſh, or repreſent their duty to them, as inconſiſtent with their entire obedience to their father and maſter who is in heaven, there might then be ſome pretence to neglect inſtructing them in the principles of ſuch a religion. But ſince the precepts of this pure and undefiled religion, are all of them holy, juſt, and good; and the more they are taught their duty to GOD, the better they will perform their duties to you; methinks, to neglect the improvement of their ſouls, out of a dread of ſpending too much time in religious duties, is acting quite contrary to your own intereſt as well as duty.

5. *Fifthly* and *Laſtly*, If neither gratitude to GOD, love to your children, common juſtice to your ſervants, nor even that moſt prevailing motive ſelf-intereſt, will excite; yet let a conſideration of the *terrors of the* LORD perſuade you to put in practice the pious reſolution in the text. Remember, the time will come, and that perhaps very ſhortly, when we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of CHRIST; where we muſt give a ſolemn and ſtrict account how we have had our converſation, in our reſpective families in this world. How will you endure to ſee your children and ſervants (who ought to be your joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of our LORD JESUS CHRIST) coming out as ſo many ſwift witneſſes againſt you; curſing the father that begot them, the womb that bare them, the paps which they have ſucked, and the day they ever entered into your houſes? Think you not, the damnation which men muſt endure for their own ſins, will be ſufficient, that they need load themſelves with the additional guilt of being acceſſary to the damnation of others alſo? O conſider this, all ye that forget to ſerve the LORD with your reſpective houſholds, "leſt he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you!"

But GOD forbid, brethren, that any ſuch evil ſhould befal you; no, rather will I hope, that you have been in ſome

meaſure convinced by what has been ſaid of the great importance of *family-religion*; and therefore are ready to cry out in the words immediately following the text, "God forbid that we ſhould forſake the LORD;" and again, ver. 21, "Nay, but we will (with our ſeveral houſholds) ſerve the LORD."

And that there may be always ſuch a heart in you, let me exhort all governors of families, in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, often to reflect on the ineſtimable worth of their own ſouls, and the infinite ranſom, even the precious blood of JESUS CHRIST, which has been paid down for them. Remember, I beſeech you to remember, that you are fallen creatures; that you are by nature loſt and eſtranged from GOD; and that you can never be reſtored to your primitive happineſs, till by being born again of the Holy Ghoſt, you arrive at your primitive ſtate of purity, have the image of GOD reſtamped upon your ſouls, and are thereby made meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the ſaints in light. Do, I ſay, but ſeriouſly and frequently reflect on, and act as perſons that believe ſuch important truths, and you will no more neglect your family's ſpiritual welfare than your own. No, the love of GOD, which will then be ſhed abroad in your hearts, will conſtrain you to do your utmoſt to preſerve them: and the deep ſenſe of GOD's free grace in CHRIST JESUS, (which you will then have) in calling you, will excite you to do your utmoſt to ſave others, eſpecially thoſe of your own houſhold. And though, after all your pious endeavours, ſome may continue unreformed; yet you will have this comfortable reflection to make, that you did what you could to make your families religious: and therefore may reſt aſſured of ſitting down in the kingdom of heaven, with *Abraham*, *Joſhua*, and *Cornelius*, and all the godly houſholders, who in their ſeveral generations ſhone forth as ſo many lights in their reſpective houſholds upon earth. *Amen.*

SERMON

SERMON V.

CHRIST the beſt Huſband: Or an earneſt Invitation to Young Women to come and ſee CHRIST.

Preached to a Society of Young Women, in *Fetter-Lane.*

PSALM xlv. 10, 11.

Hearken, O Daughter, and conſider, and incline thine Ear: Forget alſo thine own People, and thy Father's Houſe: So ſhall the King greatly deſire thy Beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worſhip thou him.

THIS pſalm is called the ſong of loves, the moſt pure and ſpiritual, the moſt dear and delightful loves; namely, thoſe which are between CHRIST the beloved, and his church, which is his ſpouſe; wherein is ſet forth, firſt, the LORD JESUS CHRIST in regard of his majeſty, power, and divinity, his truth, meekneſs and equity: And then the ſpouſe is ſet forth, in regard of her ornaments, companions, attendants and poſterity; and both in regard of their comelineſs and beauty. After the deſcription of CHRIST, an invitation to his eſpouſals, is given the children of men, called by the name of daughter; and therefore, particularly applicable unto you, my dear ſiſters, as being the daughters of men, yet not ſo as excluding the ſons of men.

I ſhall now, therefore, conſider the words, as ſpoken to you in particular, and containing this doctrine;

That the LORD JESUS CHRIST doth invite the daughters of men to be his ſpouſe; and is exceeding deſirous of their beauty; who, forgetting their people and father's houſe, do

hearken, conſider and incline to his invitation, and join themſelves to him in this relation.

I ſhall ſhew,

I. How CHRIST doth eſpouſe himſelf unto the children, but, more eſpecially, unto the daughters of men.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST, doth eſpouſe himſelf unto the children of men, in this world, but the public ſolemnization of the marriage, is reſerved until the laſt day; when his ſpouſe ſhall be brought forth to him, in white robes, and a raiment of perfect righteouſneſs, more rich and curious, my dear ſiſters, than any of your needle-work; and the marriage feaſt will be kept in his Father's houſe, in heaven, where they ſhall be received into the neareſt and cloſeſt embraces of his love. The marriage knot is tied here, in which are included four things:

Firſt, Mutual Choice,
Secondly, Mutual Affection.
Thirdly, Mutual Union.
Fourthly, Mutual Obligation.

Firſt, My dear ſiſters, there is a *mutual choice*, which is not only in CHRIST, as Mediator, but alſo by CHRIST as the eternal Son of GOD, yea, GOD himſelf; notwithſtanding all that the polite *Arians* and *Socinians* ſay to the contrary. The LORD JESUS CHRIST, my dear ſiſters, doth chuſe you merely by his free grace; it is freely of his own mercy, that he brings you into the marriage covenant: You, who have ſo grievouſly offended him, yet, the LORD JESUS CHRIST hath choſen you; you did not, you would not have choſen him; but when once, my dear ſiſters, he hath choſen you, then, and not till then, you make choice of him for your Lord and Huſband.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST when he firſt comes to you, finds you full of ſin and pollution; you are deformed, defiled, enſlaved, poor, miſerable and wretched, very deſpicable and loathſome, by reaſon of ſin; and he maketh choice of you, not becauſe of your holineſs, nor of your beauty, nor of your being qualified for them; no, the LORD JESUS CHRIST puts thoſe qualifications upon you, as may make you meet for his embrace; and you are drawn to make choice of this LORD JESUS CHRIST becauſe he firſt choſe you.

Secondly, In this eſpouſal of your's, my dear ſiſters, there is a *mutual affection*; this doth accompany the choice. Your hearts are drawn out after CHRIST; your ſouls pant and long for him; you cannot be at reſt until you are engaged to this JESUS: You are ready to cry out continually, none but CHRIST, none but CHRIST: this is the language of your hearts, if you are truly ſenſible of your need of him. The more acquaintance you have of this LORD JESUS, the more pleaſed you are with your choice, and the more your affections are drawn towards him. And where can you place your affections better than upon that JESUS who ſhed his blood for your ſakes? Surely he deſerves both your loves and affections: Go on, go on, my dear ſiſters, that your affections may grow ſtronger and ſtronger.

Thirdly, There is not only mutual choice, and mutual affection, but likewiſe *mutual Union*: And here doth the marriage lie chiefly, in this union; CHRIST and ſouls are contracted, and the knot is tied ſo faſt, that neither men on earth, how great ſoever they be, nor devils in hell, though they ſhould combine all their wrath and rage together, ſtill they cannot diſſolve, they cannot untie it; no, my dear ſiſters, it is indiſſolvable, for the union is, by the ſpirit, on CHRIST's part, and by faith on your's: By the ſpirit, CHRIST doth lay hold on you; and by faith, you do lay hold on him; and thus the match is made; CHRIST becomes your's, his perſon, portion, and all his benefits are your's; and you become CHRIST's, your perſons, your hearts, and all that you have is reſigned up unto him; and O that they may be ſo more and more.

Fourthly, There is a *mutual Obligation* between CHRIST and his ſpouſe. CHRIST obliges himſelf to love you here; he will not, indeed he never will leave you, he will protect you from the malice of the *Phariſees* of this generation, he will provide for you in all difficulties; he will live with you here, and at laſt he will take you to himſelf, to live with him for ever. And you are engaged to him to be loving, loyal, faithful, obedient; and you are to ſtick cloſe to him as long as you live; and then you will find yourſelves to be married to the beſt advantage, both for ſoul and body, for time and for eternity.

II. CHRIST doth invite all of you to be his ſpouſe.

And it is on this account that he ſends forth his miniſters to preach. It is this, that makes me thus come among you; that you would accept of this invitation, to which, in the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, I do call and intreat you to take him, on his own terms. He calls all of you, my ſiſters, whether elder or younger, whether married or unmarried, of higher degree, or of the meaneſt quality, the pooreſt ſervants, yea, the rabble of this world, as the world calls you, who are willing to be eſpouſed unto the LORD JESUS CHRIST. I ſay, the poor are as welcome to be CHRIST's ſpouſe as thoſe that are rich. He regardeth not the rich more than the poor: he choſe a mean virgin, eſpouſed to a carpenter, to be his mother; and he chuſeth and calleth all ſuch to be his ſpouſe; then be not diſcouraged at your being deſpiſed in the world; for if you are but loved by CHRIST, and eſpouſed to him, it will be an over-ſufficiency for all the trouble that you have met with here.

III. Thoſe who would be eſpouſed unto CHRIST, muſt hearken, conſider, and incline to his invitation, and forget even their father's houſe.

Such as would be eſpouſed unto CHRIST muſt hearken. "Hearken, O daughter." Many amongſt you, my ſiſters, ſtop their ears againſt the calls of the goſpel; they ſhut their ears like the deaf adder, which will not hearken unto the voice of the charmer, though he charm never ſo wiſely. You will not hearken unto the invitations of CHRIST; you can hearken unto the vanities of the world, and be delighted with the eſpouſals of the world, but never think, or are delighted with the eſpouſals of CHRIST.

It was by the ear, that the temptation of ſin was received by the firſt man, when he departed from GOD; and by the ear, the invitation to be CHRIST's ſpouſe muſt be received, before the heart will be opened to receive JESUS CHRIST in this conjugal relation.

If you would, my dear ſiſters, be eſpouſed to CHRIST, you muſt conſider CHRIST's invitation. It is not a ſlight or bare hearing of CHRIST's invitation, which will be of any ſervice

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o you, or make up the match between CHRIST and your ouls; no, you muſt receive CHRIST in the heart; you muſt conſider the thing itſelf, the advantages of it, the difference between CHRIST's invitations and the devil's temptations, or any of the world's proffers.

Thoſe who would be eſpouſed to CHRIST, muſt be inclined to accept of CHRIST's invitation. "Hearken, O daughter, conſider and incline thine ear." This is to incline your hearts: You muſt conſent with you wills; there muſt be a compliance to the motion of CHRIST, and you muſt have deſires after CHRIST, and then your hearts will ſay, 'LORD, let us be thy ſpouſe, and be thou our beloved.'

You muſt likewiſe forget your father's houſe. "Hearken, O daughter, and conſider, and forget thy father's houſe." You are not here to caſt off all affections unto natural relations; but you muſt forget all relations, ſo as to be ready to forego all their favour, when it ſtandeth in competition with that of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and do not let your carnal friends and relations hinder you from cloſing with, and eſpouſing the LORD JESUS. I earneſtly beſeech you to ſuffer the loſs of any thing, rather than to loſe his favours; you muſt indeed forget your own people, that is, you muſt forget all your evil cuſtoms which you have learned in your father's houſe, and forſake all your vain converſation, your reading of plays, novels, or romances; and you muſt keep from learning to ſing the ſongs of the drunkard; for CHRIST, if you are his ſpouſe, hath redeemed you.

Such of you, my dear ſiſters, as are eſpouſed to the LORD JESUS CHRIST are very beautiful. I do not mean in reſpect of your bodies; you may have leſs of external comelineſs than others, in reſpect of your bodies, but as to your ſouls you will exceed in beauty, not ſo much in the eyes of man, as in the eyes of GOD; ſuch have the moſt beautiful image of GOD ſtamped upon them; none in the world, beſide them, have the leaſt ſpark of ſpiritual beauty. Such as are not married to CHRIST, are unregenerated, they are not born again, nor brought from ſin unto GOD, which muſt be done before you be eſpouſed to CHRIST.

And the LORD JESUS CHRIST deſireth to ſee this beauty in his ſpouſe, for he cries out, "O my dove, thou art in the

clefts of the rock, in the ſecret places of the ſtairs, let me ſe thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for ſweet is thy voic and thy countenance is comely." He calleth his ſpouſe h love, being the dear object of his love; and he admireth h lovelineſs; he repeats it twice in one verſe, "Behold thou a fair, my love, behold thou art fair." Thus you ſee he d ſcribes their beauty. And then, my ſiſters, we have a won derful expreſſion of CHRIST to his ſpouſe, "Thou haſt ra viſhed my heart, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe, thou haſt raviſhed m heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. Thus you ſee how pleaſed the LORD JESUS CHRIST is wit his ſpouſe; and will not you, therefore, be eſpouſed unto th LORD JESUS? I offer JESUS CHRIST to all of you; if yo have been never ſo notorious for ſin, if you have been as gre a harlot as *Mary Magdalen* was, when once you are eſpouſe to CHRIST, you ſhall be forgiven. Therefore be not diſcou raged, at whatever ſlights and contempts the world may pa upon you, but come and join yourſelves to the LORD JES CHRIST, and all your ſins ſhall be waſhed away in h blood; and when once you are eſpouſed to JESUS, you a disjoined from ſin, you are born again. You are now, as were, eſpouſed unto ſin; ſin is your huſband, and you are t fond of it, but when once you are married to CHRIST, wh you are born again, then you may be ſaid to die unto ſi but till then, ſin liveth in your affections; therefore, my ſi ters, give ſin its death-wound in your hearts; you have be called by the word time after time, and it has had no effe upon you; but when you are eſpouſed unto the LORD JES CHRIST, then you will be brought to him by his Spirit; Y will then lay hold on him by faith, his Spirit will draw y unto himſelf; he will make you to be willing in the day of h power; he will give you faith in him. Faith is the hand the ſoul which layeth hold on CHRIST; therefore, do not r contented till you have this grace of faith wrought in you wi power; do not be contented till you have received the Lo JESUS CHRIST.

Embrace CHRIST in the arms of your deareſt love; th you love the LORD JESUS CHRIST with ſincerity, when y love and eſteem him before father, mother, or all the delig and pleaſures of this life; but if you do delight in any thi

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that this world can produce, more than in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, you have no true love to him.

If you are eſpouſed to CHRIST, you have acquaintance and converſe with him; you will endeavour to promote his intereſt, and advance his name in the world; when others are going to the polite and faſhionable diverſions of life, you will be labouring to bring honour to the LORD JESUS CHRIST; you will commend your beloved above all other beloveds, and endeavour to bring others into love to him. Can you, my dear ſiſters, who are now aſſembled to worſhip GOD, ſhew ſuch evidence of your eſpouſals unto the LORD JESUS CHRIST? O! how joyful, how comfortable an eſtate is this! Surely this is a marriage worth ſeeking after; this is the only deſirable marriage, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST is the only lover that is worth ſeeking after.

Now, my dear ſiſters, I ſhall ſpeak a few words to thoſe of you who have not yet eſpouſed yourſelves to the LORD JESUS. It is a great ſin, and ſurely you highly affront the LORD that bought you. It is likewiſe your folly to refuſe and neglect the gracious proffers of being the ſpouſe of CHRIST; hereby you forfeit all that love which he would beſtow upon you; hereby you chuſe rags before robes, droſs before gold, pebbles before jewels, guilt before a pardon, wounds before healing, defilement before cleanſing, deformity before comelineſs, trouble before peace, ſlavery before liberty, the ſervice of the devil before the ſervice of CHRIST. Hereby you chuſe diſhonour before a crown, death before life, hell before heaven, eternal miſery and torment before everlaſting joy and glory. And need there a farther evidence of your folly and madneſs, in refuſing and neglecting CHRIST to be your ſpouſe.

My dear ſiſters, I ſhould exceed the limits of your time, ſhould I particularize all the advantages which you would obtain by being eſpouſed to the LORD JESUS. This is your wiſdom; they are fooliſh virgins who refuſe; but you are the wiſe virgins who have accepted of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and have diſpoſed of yourſelves to him; you have made the wiſeſt choice; and however the blind world may deem you fools, and deſpiſe you as being methodically mad, yet you are wiſe in the eſteem of GOD, and will, one day, appear ſo in the eſteem of them that now deſpiſe you. It is your glory

that you are eſpouſed unto the LORD JESUS; and therefore glory in your eſpouſal; glory not in yourſelves, but in the LORD who hath thus freely and graciouſly beſtowed theſe favours upon you. It is your ſafety to be eſpouſed unto the LORD JESUS CHRIST, he will protect and defend you even from ſin and ſatan, and eternal ruin; and therefore thus far you are ſafe; he hath a regard for you in times of danger from men, and theſe times of danger ſeem to be haſtening; it is now ariſing as a black cloud no bigger than a man's hand, and by and by it will overſpread the heavens, and when it is full it will burſt; but if you are eſpouſed to CHRIST, you are ſafe.

Now, my dear ſiſters, I ſhall conclude with an earneſt exhortation to high and low, rich and poor, one with another, to be eſpouſed unto CHRIST.

Let me ſpeak unto you, young women, who are not yet eſpouſed unto CHRIST, in an eſpecial manner. It may be to ſatisfy your curioſity, has brought many of you here; though, perhaps, this may be the time when you ſhall be brought home to embrace the LORD JESUS, and be eſpouſed to him. And O, that I may perſuade you, by his Spirit, to eſpouſe yourſelves unto the LORD of life.

And if you are but brought to cloſe with the LORD JESUS CHRIST, I ſhall attain my end, and then both you and I ſhall rejoice that I preached this ſermon to you.

Come virgins, will you give me leave to be a ſuitor unto you, not in my own name, but in the name of the LORD? O! that I may prevail with you for your affections, and perſuade you to give them unto CHRIST! May I be inſtrumental of bringing your ſouls to CHRIST! May I be inſtrumental to join you and CHRIST together this day!

Be not coy, as ſome of you poſſibly are in other loves: modeſty and the virgin bluſh may very well become you, when propoſals of another kind are made unto you; but here coyneſs is folly, and backwardneſs to accept of this motion, is ſhame: you have ten thouſand times more reaſon to bluſh at the refuſal of CHRIST for your beloved, than at the acceptance; when otherwiſe the devil and ſin would raviſh your virgin affections. Never had you a better motion made to you; never was ſuch a match proffered to you as this, of being matched and eſpouſed unto the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

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Conſider who the LORD JESUS is, whom you are invited to eſpouſe yourſelves unto; he is the beſt huſband; there is none comparable to JESUS CHRIST.

Do you deſire one that is great? He is of the higheſt dignity, he is the glory of heaven, the darling of eternity, admired by angels, dreaded by devils, and adored by ſaints. For you to be eſpouſed to ſo great a king, what honour will you have by this eſpouſal?

Do you deſire one that is rich? None is comparable to CHRIST, the fulneſs of the earth belongs to him: If you be eſpouſed to CHRIST, you ſhall ſhare in his unſearchable riches; you ſhall receive of his fulneſs, even grace for grace here, and you ſhall hereafter be admitted to glory, and ſhall live with this JESUS to all eternity.

Do you deſire one that is wiſe? There is none comparable to CHRIST for wiſdom. His knowledge is infinite, and his wiſdom is correſpondent thereto. And if you are eſpouſed to CHRIST, he will guide and counſel you, and make you wiſe unto ſalvation.

Do you deſire one that is potent, who may defend you againſt your enemies, and all the inſults and reproaches of the Phariſees of this generation? There is none that can equal CHRIST in power; for the LORD JESUS CHRIST hath all power.

Do you deſire one that is good? There is none like unto CHRIST in this regard; others may have ſome goodneſs, but it is imperfect; CHRIST's goodneſs is compleat and perfect, he is full of goodneſs, and in him dwelleth no evil.

Do you deſire one that is beautiful? His eyes are moſt ſparkling, his looks and glances of love are raviſhing, his ſmiles are moſt delightful and refreſhing unto the ſoul: CHRIST is the moſt lovely perſon of all others in the world.

Do you deſire one that can love you? None can love you like CHRIST: His love, my dear ſiſters, is incomprehenſible; his love paſſeth all other loves: The love of the LORD JESUS is firſt, without beginning; his love is free without any motive; his love is great without any meaſure; his love is conſtant without any change, and his love is everlaſting.

It was the love of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, my dear ſiſters, which brought him down from heaven; and which veiled

veiled his divinity in a human ſoul and body; for he is GOD over all bleſſed for ever: It was love that made him ſubject to hunger, thirſt and ſorrow; he was humbled, even unto death for you; for you who are eſpouſed to him, he underwent the painful, ſhameful and ignominious death of the croſs: and can you, my ſiſters, hear this, and not be concerned to think that the bleſſed JESUS underwent all this for ſuch ſinful creatures as you and I are? And when out of love he had finiſhed the redemption on earth, as to what was needful for ſatisfaction; it was his love that carried him back to heaven, where he was before, that he might make application of what he had purchaſed, that there he might make interceſſion for thoſe whom he had redeemed, and prepare a place for them, even glorious manſions with himſelf, in the houſe not made with hands, which is eternal in the heavens. It is out of love that he ſendeth ſuch tokens to his people from heaven to earth, which he conveyeth through his ordinances, by his Spirit unto them. Surely then none is ſo deſerving as the LORD JESUS CHRIST for you to eſpouſe yourſelves unto: if you be eſpouſed unto CHRIST he is your's, all that he is, all that he hath; you ſhall have his heart, and ſhare in the choiceſt expreſſions of his deareſt love.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST, my dear ſiſters, doth beſeech you to be his ſpouſe. We miniſters have a commiſſion from the LORD JESUS CHRIST to invite you, in his name, unto this very thing; and CHRIST's invitations are real; general; frequent; earneſt; free.

CHRIST's invitations of you, to be his ſpouſe, are *real*; and as the thing is real, ſo you, my dear ſiſters, are really invited unto it. The LORD doth not mock and diſſemble with you, as ſome pretending lovers, who diſſemble love unto virgins, until they have gained their affections, and then falſely and baſely relinquiſh them, never really intending either to eſpouſe, or marry them: but the LORD doth really intend the thing, in his invitations of you; he never caſt off any whoſe conſent and affections he had gained. Again,

CHRIST's invitations of you, my dear ſiſters, are *general*. All of you are invited, none of you are excluded; all ſorts of ſinners are invited; the moſt vile and abominable ſinners, the moſt notorious tranſgreſſors are invited to be CHRIST's

ſpouſe,

ſpouſe, and ſhall be as welcome as any unto the embraces of his love.

CHRIST's invitations of you are *frequent:* JESUS CHRIST calls on you frequently; he hath waited on you time after time, one year after another; and he doth now invite you, by me this day, to come unto Him. Do not ſlight this invitation, but receive it with joy and thankfulneſs. Come, I beſeech you, to this JESUS, who thus invites you to be his ſpouſe. Again,

CHRIST's invitations to be his ſpouſe are *earneſt*; he doth call upon you, and not only call, but call earneſtly too; yea, he uſeth many arguments with you: he will preſs you to come unto him; he is loth to take any denial from you; he knocks, and knocks hard at the door of your hearts for entertainment; and ſurely you will not deny the LORD of life and glory who died for you, and gave himſelf for you: O my dear ſiſters, let this be the evening of your eſpouſals to the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

He invites you *freely* to be his ſpouſe, for all his invitations are free; he doth not expect a portion with you, as worldly lovers do; He wants nothing of you: nay, you muſt have nothing, if you be eſpouſed unto the LORD JESUS CHRIST. If you be poor, miſerable, blind, naked, JESUS CHRIST will ſupply all theſe defects of his own free mercy; he will fill and ſupply you with all things out of his treaſury; he will make you meet for himſelf; he will prepare you to live with him for ever.

Conſider, if you be once eſpouſed unto CHRIST, if once joined in this relation, you ſhall never be ſeparated from him; neither men nor devils ſhall be able to ſeparate you: none, none, ſhall disjoin you; and when death doth break all other bonds, it ſhall not break the conjugal bond between you and CHRIST, but bring you unto the moſt full and everlaſting poſſeſſion of your beloved.

And what do you now ſay, young women? ſhall I have a grant for my maſter, or be ſent away with a repulſe and refuſal; no, I cannot carry ſuch a meſſage to my maſter; I hope better things of you, my ſiſters, and things which accompany ſalvation: methinks by this time ye ſhould begin to have a mind unto JESUS CHRIST; you look as if you did

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deſire; you hearken as if you would conſent. What do you ſay? Shall the match be made up this evening between CHRIST and your ſouls? O that I may be inſtrumental in joining your hands, or rather your hearts together: O that I may be inſtrumental to tie that knot, which never can be unlooſed.

Some marry in haſte, and repent at leiſure; but if you were once eſpouſed unto JESUS CHRIST, you would never repent; nothing would grieve you, but that you were not joined to him ſooner; and you would not be disjoined again for all the world.

Shall this be the day of your eſpouſals? Some of you have ſtayed a long time; and will you defer any longer? If you will not now, perhaps you may never have another opportunity; this may be the laſt time of aſking; and therefore it is dangerous to refuſe: ſome of you are very young, too young for other eſpouſals; but none of you, my dear ſiſters, are too young to be eſpouſed unto the LORD JESUS CHRIST: in other eſpouſals, you muſt have the conſent of your parents; but in this you are at your own diſpoſal; you may give, and ought to match yourſelves to CHRIST, whether parents do conſent or not.

But if any of you ſhould aſk, what you muſt do that you may be eſpouſed unto CHRIST? You muſt be ſenſible of your need of being eſpouſed to him; and untill you are ſenſible of your need of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, you cannot be eſpouſed to him: You muſt have deſires after this JESUS, and ſeek unto him for an intereſt in him; you muſt cry nightly unto him to eſpouſe you to himſelf: put off the filthineſs of ſin and all its defilements; and then, my ſiſters, put on the white raiment, and clean garments, which CHRIST hath provided for you, the robes of his righteouſneſs; in theſe garments you ſhall be beautiful; and in theſe garments you ſhall be accepted: you muſt have the wedding garment on; you muſt put off all your own good works, for they will be but a means to keep you from CHRIST; no, you muſt come as not having your own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but you muſt have the righteouſneſs of CHRIST. Therefore, come unto the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and he will give it to you; he will not ſend you away without it.

Receive him upon his own terms, and he is your's for ever: O devote yourſelves to him, ſoul and body, and all, to be his for ever; and CHRIST will be your's, and then happy, happy you, that ever you were born! But if any of you die before this eſpouſal unto the LORD JESUS CHRIST, then woe, woe, unto you, that ever you had a being in life; but if you go to CHRIST you ſhall be eſpouſed unto the LORD JESUS: though your ſins have been never ſo great, yea, the blood of CHRIST will cleanſe you from them; the marriage covenant between CHRIST and your ſouls will diſſolve all your ſins; you will then be weary of your old ways, for all things will become new in your ſouls.

Now, my dear Siſters, I ſhall conclude by juſt ſpeaking a word or two to thoſe of you, who are already eſpouſed unto the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

O admire, admire the rich and free grace, which hath brought you to this relation: Is not this an inſtance of the greateſt of love, that you ſhould be the ſpouſe of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? You that had no beauty, you that had no comelineſs, that was full of ſin, that He ſhould embrace ſuch as you and I are; that we ſhould be taken into the embrace of this LORD JESUS. O infinite condeſcending kindneſs! O amazing love! Reverence, reverence, I beſeech you, this LORD JESUS CHRIST.

He is your LORD, and you muſt reverence him, love and be faithful unto him, be ſubject to him, and careful to pleaſe him in every thing; endeavour to keep up a daily communion with him; look, long and prepare for CHRIST's ſecond appearance, when the nuptials between you ſhall be ſolemnized, and you live with him in manſions of everlaſting joys, where you ſhall love and live with this king of glory for ever and ever.

I know not how to conclude; methinks I could ſpeak to you till midnight, if it would bring you unto the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and make you be eſpouſed to him, for indeed, that will be the eſpouſal which will turn to the greateſt advantage, as you will find by experience, if you will but make the trial; and that you may do ſo, my prayers and my conſtant endeavours ſhall be uſed.

I will,

I will, my dear ſiſters, ſpend and be ſpent for you, and by the aſſiſtance of GOD, will perſevere in this that I have begun; and as many of you may have opportunity ſome evening in the week, without breaking in on the buſineſs of life; I ſhall therefore, my ſiſters, either be here, or where you ſhall be publicly acquainted with: I will not mind being reproached or deſpiſed: the men of this world may uſe what language they pleaſe; they may ſay I am a Methodiſt. Indeed, my ſiſters, I am reſolved, by the grace of GOD, to uſe all methods I can, to pluck you from Satan, that you may be as brands plucked from the burning fire: this ſhall be my method, which I hope will be the means of effectually ſaving your precious and immortal ſouls.

And if I am the inſtrument of this, I ſhall rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice in ſpight of what men, or devils, can ſay or do to the contrary: and may the LORD JESUS CHRIST direct, and aſſiſt me at all times, to act what will be moſt for his glory, and the welfare of your ſouls: and may you all ſay a hearty Amen thereto.

"Now the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who is GOD over all,
"bleſſed for ever, aſſiſt and watch over you, keep you
"from all evil and ſin here, and preſent you before his
"Father faultleſs at the great day of account! To this
"LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Father, and the bleſſed
"Spirit, three perſons and but one eternal and inviſible
"GOD, be aſcribed all honour, power, glory, might,
"majeſty and dominion, now, henceforth, and for ever
"more. Amen, Amen."

"The grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the love of
"GOD, and the fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt be with
"you all, to comfort under, and deliver you from tri-
"bulation; to preſerve you to your reſpective places of
"abode; and when there, to keep you in his fear, that
"you may live to his glory; that to live may be
"CHRIST's, and to die be your eternal gain; ſo that
"you may live with him through eternal ages, and ſing
"Hallelujahs to him for ever. Amen."

SERMON

SERMON VI.

Britain's Mercies, and *Britain*'s Duty.

Preached at *Philadelphia*, on *Sunday*, *Auguſt* 24, 1746. and occaſioned by the Suppreſſion of the late unnatural Rebellion.

PSALM CV. 45.

That they might obſerve his Statutes and keep his Laws.

MEN, brethren, and fathers, and all ye to whom I am about to preach the kingdom of GOD, I ſuppoſe you need not be informed, that being indiſpenſibly obliged to be abſent on your late thankſgiving-day, I could not ſhew my obedience to the governor's proclamation, as my own inclination led me, or as might juſtly be expected from, and demanded of me. But as the occaſion of that day's thankſgiving is yet, and I truſt ever will be, freſh in our memory, I cannot think that a diſcourſe on that ſubject can even now be altogether unſeaſonable. I take it for granted, further, that you need not be informed, that among the various motives which are generally urged to enforce obedience to the divine commands, that of love is the moſt powerful and cogent. The terrors of the law may affright and awe, but love diſſolves and melts the heart. "The love of CHRIST," ſays the great apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, "conſtraineth us." Nay, love is ſo abſolutely neceſſary for thoſe that name the name of CHRIST, that without it, their obedience cannot truly be ſtiled evangelical, or be acceptable in the ſight of GOD. "Although, (ſays the apoſtle) I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity," (i. e. unleſs unfeigned love to GOD, and to mankind for his great

great name's ſake, be the principle of ſuch actions, howſoever it may benefit others) it profiteth me nothing." This is the conſtant language of the lively oracles of GOD. And, from them it is equally plain, that nothing has a greater tendency to beget and excite ſuch an obediential love in us, than a ſerious and frequent conſideration of the manifold mercies we receive time after time from the hands of our heavenly Father. The royal pſalmiſt, who had the honour of being ſtiled, "the man after GOD's own heart," had an abundant experience of this. Hence it is, that whilſt he is muſing on the divine goodneſs, the fire of divine love kindles in his ſoul; and, out of the abundance of his heart, his mouth ſpeaketh ſuch grateful and extatic language as this. "What ſhall I render unto the LORD for all his mercies? Bleſs the LORD, O my ſoul, and all that is within me, bleſs his holy name." And why? "who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diſeaſes, who redeemeth thy life from deſtruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindneſs and tender mercies." And when the ſame holy man of GOD had a mind to ſtir up the people of the *Jews* to ſet about a national reformation, as the moſt weighty and prevailing argument he could make uſe of for that purpoſe, he lays before them, as it were, in a draught, many national mercies, and diſtinguiſhing deliverances, which have been conferred upon and wrought out for them, by the moſt high GOD. The pſalm to which the words of our text belong, is a pregnant proof of this; it being a kind of epitome or compendium of the whole *Jewiſh* hiſtory: at leaſt it contains an enumeration of many ſignal and extraordinary bleſſings the *Iſraelites* had received from GOD, and alſo the improvement they were in duty bound to make of them, "Obſerve his ſtatutes and keep his laws."

To run through all the particulars of the pſalm, or draw a parallel (which might with great eaſe and juſtice be done) between GOD's dealings with us and the *Iſraelites* of old: To enumerate all the national mercies beſtowed upon, and remarkable deliverances wrought out for the kingdoms of *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*, from the infant ſtate of *William* the *Norman* to their preſent manhood, and more than *Auguſtan* maturity, under the auſpicious reign of our rightful Sovereign

King

King *George* the ſecond; howſoever pleaſing and profitable it might be at any other time, would, at this juncture, prove, if not an irkſome, yet an unreaſonable undertaking.

The occaſion of the late ſolemnity, I mean the ſuppreſſion of a moſt horrid and unnatural rebellion, will afford more than ſufficient matter for a diſcourſe of this nature, and furniſh us with abundant motives to love and obey that glorious *Jehovah*, who giveth ſalvation unto kings, and delivers his people from the hurtful ſword.

Need I make an apology, before this auditory, if, in order to ſee the greatneſs of our late deliverance, I ſhould remind you of the many unſpeakable bleſſings which we have for a courſe of years enjoyed, during the reign of his preſent Majeſty, and the gentle, mild adminiſtration under which we live? Without juſtly incurring the cenſure of giving flattering titles, I believe all who have eyes to ſee, and ears to hear, and are but a little acquainted with our public affairs, muſt acknowledge, that we have one of the beſt of Kings. It is now above nineteen years ſince he began to reign over us. And yet, was he ſeated on a royal throne, and were all his ſubjects placed before him, was he to addreſs them as *Samuel* once addreſſed the *Iſraelites*, "Behold here I am, old and grey-headed, witneſs againſt me before the LORD, whoſe ox have I taken? Or whoſe aſs have I taken? Or, whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppreſſed?" They muſt, if they would do him juſtice, make the ſame anſwer as was given to *Samuel*, "Thou haſt not defrauded us, nor oppreſſed us." What *Tertullus*, by way of flattery, ſaid to *Felix*, may with the ſtricteſt juſtice be applied to our ſovereign, "By thee we enjoy great quietneſs, and very worthy deeds have been done unto our nation by thy providence." He has been indeed *Pater Patriæ*, a father to our country, and though old and grey-headed, has jeoparded his precious life for us in the high places of the field. Nor has he leſs deſerved the great and glorious title, which the LORD promiſes, that kings ſhould ſuſtain in the latter days, I mean, "a nurſing father of the church." For not only the Church of *England*, as by law eſtabliſhed, but all denominations of chriſtians whatſoever, have enjoyed their religious as well as civil liberties. As there has been no authorized oppreſſion in the ſtate, ſo there

has been no publicly allowed perſecution in the church. We breathe indeed in free air? as free (if not freer) both as to temporals and ſpirituals, as any nation under heaven. Nor is the proſpect likely to terminate in his majeſty's death, which I pray GOD to defer. Our princeſſes are diſpoſed of to proteſtant powers. And we have great reaſon to be aſſured, that the preſent heir apparent, and his conſort, are like minded with their royal father. And I cannot help thinking, that it is a peculiar bleſſing vouchſafed us by the King of kings, that his preſent Majeſty has been continued ſo long among us. For now, his immediate ſucceſſor (though his preſent ſituation obliges him, as it were, to lie dormant) has great and glorious opportunities, which we have reaſon to think he daily improves, of obſerving and weighing the national affairs, conſidering the various ſteps and turns of government, and conſequently of laying in a large fund of experience, to make him a wiſe and great prince, if ever GOD ſhould call him to ſway the *Britiſh* ſceptre. Happy art thou, O *England!* Happy art thou, O *America*, who on every ſide art thus highly favoured!

But, alas! how ſoon would this happy ſcene have ſhifted, and a melancholy gloomy proſpect have ſucceeded in its room, had the rebels gained their point, and a popiſh abjured pretender been forced upon the *Britiſh* throne! For, ſuppoſing his birth not to be ſpurious, (as we have great reaſon to think it really was) what could we expect from one, deſcended from a father, who, when Duke of *York*, put all *Scotland* into confuſion; and afterwards, when crowned King of *England*, for his arbritrary and tyrannical government, both in church and ſtate, was juſtly obliged to abdicate the throne, by the aſſertors of *Britiſh* liberty? Or, ſuppoſing the horrid plot, firſt hatched in hell, and afterwards nurſed at *Rome*, had taken place; ſuppoſing, I ſay, the old Pretender ſhould have obtained the triple crown, and have transferred his pretended title (as it is reported he has done) to his eldeſt ſon, what was all this for, but that, by being advanced to the popedom, he might rule both ſon and ſubjects with leſs controul, and by their united intereſt, keep the three kingdoms of *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*, in greater vaſſallage to the ſee of *Rome*? Ever ſince this unnatural rebellion broke out, I have looked upon

upon the young Pretender as the phaeton of the preſent age. He is ambitiouſly and preſumptuouſly aiming to ſeat himſelf in the throne of our rightful ſovereign King *George*, which he is no more capable of keeping, than *Phaeton* was to guide the chariot of the ſun; and had he ſucceeded in his attempt, like him, would only have ſet the world on fire. It is true, to do him juſtice, he has deſerved well of the Church of *Rome*, and, in all probability, will hereafter be canonized amongſt the noble order of their fictitious ſaints. But, with what an iron rod we might expect to have been bruiſed, had his troops been victorious, may eaſily be gathered from thoſe cruel orders ſaid to be found in the pockets of ſome of his officers, "Give no quarters to the Elector's troops." Add to this, that there was great reaſon to ſuſpect, that, upon the firſt news of the ſucceſs of the rebels, a general maſſacre was intended. So that if the LORD had not been on our ſide, *Great Britain*, not to ſay *America*, would, in a few weeks or months, have been an *Aceldama*, a field of blood.

Beſides, was a *Popiſh* Pretender to rule over us, inſtead of being repreſented by a free parliament, and governed by laws made by their conſent, as we now are; we ſhould ſhortly have had only the ſhadow of one, and it may be, no parliament at all. This is the native product of a *Popiſh* government, and what the unhappy family, from which this young adventurer pretends he deſcended, has always aimed at. Arbitrary principles he has ſucked in with his mother's milk, and if he had been ſo honeſt, inſtead of that immature motto upon his ſtandard, *Tandem triumphans*, only to have put, *Stet pro ratione Voluntas*, he had given us a ſhort, but true portrait of the nature of his intended, but bleſſed be GOD, now defeated reign. And why ſhould I mention, that the ſinking of the national debt, or rending away the funded property of the people, and the diſſolution of the preſent happy union between the two kingdoms, would have been the immediate conſequences of his ſucceſs, as he himſelf declares in his ſecond manifeſto, dated from *Holy-rood Houſe?* Theſe are evils, and great ones too; but then they are only evils of a temporary nature. They chiefly concern the body, and muſt neceſſarily terminate in the grave.

But, alas! what an inundation of ſpiritual miſchiefs, would ſoon have overflowed the Church, and what unſpeakable danger ſhould we and our poſterity have been reduced to in reſpect to our better parts, our precious and immortal ſouls? How ſoon would whole ſwarms of monks, dominicans and friars, like ſo many locuſts, have overſpread and plagued the nation; with what winged ſpeed would foreign titular biſhops have poſted over, in order to take poſſeſſion of their reſpective ſees? How quickly would our univerſities have been filled with youths who have been ſent abroad by their *Popiſh* parents, in order to drink in all the ſuperſtitions of the church of *Rome?* What a ſpeedy period would have been put to ſocieties of all kinds, for promoting chriſtian knowledge, and propagating the goſpel in foreign parts? How ſoon would our pulpits have every where been filled with theſe old antichriſtian doctrines, free-will, meriting by works, tranſubſtantiation, purgatory, works of ſupererogation, paſſive-obedience, non-reſiſtance, and all the other abominations of the whore of *Babylon?* How ſoon would our proteſtant charity ſchools in *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*, have been pulled down, our Bibles forcibly taken from us, and ignorance every where ſet up as the mother of devotion? How ſoon ſhould we have been deprived of that invaluable bleſſing, liberty of conſcience, and been obliged to commence (what they falſely call) catholicks, or ſubmit to all the tortures which a bigoted zeal, guided by the moſt cruel principles, could poſſibly invent? How ſoon would that mother of harlots have made herſelf once more drunk with the blood of the ſaints? And the whole tribe even of free-thinkers themſelves, been brought to this dilemma, either to die martyrs for, (although I never yet heard of one that did ſo) or, contrary to all their moſt avowed principles, renounce their great *Diana*, unaſſiſted, unenlightened reaſon? But I muſt have done, leſt while I am ſpeaking againſt antichriſt, I ſhould unawares fall myſelf, and lead my hearers into an antichriſtian ſpirit. True and undefiled religion will regulate our zeal, and teach us to treat even the man of ſin with no harſher language than that which the angel gave to his grand employer Satan, "The LORD rebuke thee."

Glory

Glory be to GOD's great name! the LORD has rebuked him; and that too at a time when we had little reaſon to expect ſuch a bleſſing at GOD's hands. My dear hearers, neither the preſent frame of my heart, nor the occaſion of your late ſolemn meeting, lead me to give you a detail of our public vices. Though, alas! they are ſo many, ſo notorious, and withal of ſuch a crimſon-dye, that a goſpel miniſter would not be altogether inexcuſable, was he, even on ſuch a joyful occaſion, to lift up his voice like a trumpet, to ſhew the Britiſh nation their tranſgreſſion, and the people of *America* their ſin. However, though I would not caſt a diſmal ſhade upon the pleaſing picture the cauſe of our late rejoicings ſet before us; yet thus much may, and ought to be ſaid, that as GOD has not dealt ſo bountifully with any people as with us, ſo no nation under heaven has dealt more ungratefully with Him. We have been like *Capernaum*, lifted up to heaven in privileges, and for the abuſe of them, like her, have deſerved to be thruſt down into hell. How well ſoever it may be with us, in reſpect to our civil and eccleſiaſtical conſtitution, yet in regard to our morals, *Iſaiah*'s deſcription of the *Jewiſh* polity is too applicable, "The whole head is ſick, the whole heart is faint; from the crown of the head to the ſole of our feet, we are full of wounds and bruiſes, and putrifying ſores." We have, *Jeſhurun*-like, waxed fat and kicked. We have played the harlot againſt GOD, both in regard to principles and practices. "Our gold is become dim, and our fine gold changed." We have crucified the Son of GOD afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame. Nay, CHRIST has been wounded in the houſe of his friends. And every thing long ago ſeemed to threaten an immediate ſtorm. But, O the long-ſuffering and goodneſs of GOD to us-ward! When all things ſeemed ripe for deſtruction, and matters were come to ſuch a criſis, that GOD's praying people began to think, that though *Noah*, *Daniel* and *Job*, were living, they would only deliver their own ſouls; yet then in the midſt of judgment the Moſt High remembered mercy, and when a popiſh enemy was breaking in upon us like a flood, the LORD himſelf graciouſly lifted up a ſtandard.

This to me does not ſeem to be one of the moſt unfavourable circumſtances which have attended this mighty deliver-

ance; nor do I think you will look upon it as a circumſtance altogether unworthy your obſervation. Had this cockatrice indeed been cruſhed in the egg, and the young Pretender driven back upon his firſt arrival, it would undoubtedly have been a great bleſſing. But not ſo great as that for which you lately aſſembled to give GOD thanks: for then his Majeſty would not have had ſo good an opportunity of knowing his enemies, or trying his friends. The *Britiſh* ſubjects would in a manner have loſt the faireſt occaſion that ever offered to expreſs their loyalty and gratitude to the rightful ſovereign. *France* would not have been ſo greatly humbled; nor ſuch an effectual ſtop have been put, as we truſt there now is, to any ſuch further *Popiſh* plot, to rob us of all that is near and dear to us. "Out of the eater therefore hath come forth meat, and out of the ſtrong hath come forth ſweetneſs." The Pretender's eldeſt ſon is ſuffered not only to land in the *North-Weſt Highlands* in *Scotland*, but in a little while he becomes a great band. This for a time is not believed, but treated as a thing altogether incredible. The friends of the government in thoſe parts, not for want of loyalty, but of ſufficient authority to take up arms, could not reſiſt him. He is permitted to paſs on with his terrible banditti, and, like the comet that was lately ſeen, ſpreads his baleful influences all around him. He is likewiſe permitted to gain a ſhort-liv'd triumph by a victory over a body of our troops at *Preſton-Pans*, and to take a temporary poſſeſſion of the metropolis of *Scotland*. Of this he makes his boaſt, and informs the public, that "Providence had hitherto favoured him with wonderful ſucceſs, led him in the way to victory, and to the capital of the "antient kingdom, though he came without foreign aid." Nay, he is further permitted to preſs into the very heart of *England*. But now the Almighty interpoſes. Hitherto he was to go, and no further. Here were his malicious deſigns to be ſtaid. His troops of a ſudden are driven back. Away they poſt to the *Highlands*, and there they are ſuffered not only to increaſe, but alſo to collect themſelves into a large body, that having, as it were, what *Caligula* once wiſhed *Rome* had, but one neck, they might be cut off with one blow.

The

The time, manner, and inſtrument of this victory, deſerves our notice. It was on a general faſt-day, when the clergy and good people of *Scotland* were lamenting the diſloyalty of their perfidious countrymen, and, like *Moſes*, lifting up their hands, that *Amalek* might not prevail. The victory was total and deciſive. Little blood was ſpilt on the ſide of the Royaliſts. And, to crown all, Duke *William*, his Majeſty's youngeſt ſon, has the honour of firſt driving back, and then defeating the rebel-army. A prince, who in his infancy and youth, gave early proofs of an uncommon bravery and nobleneſs of mind; a prince, whoſe courage has increaſed with his years. Who returned wounded from the battle of *Dettingen*, behaved with ſurprizing bravery at *Fontenoy*, and now, by a conduct and magnanimity becoming the high office he ſuſtains, like his glorious predeceſſor the Prince of *Orange*, has delivered three kingdoms from the dread of popiſh cruelty, and arbitrary power. What renders it ſtill more remarkable is, The day on which his Highneſs gained this victory, was the day after his birth-day, when he was entering on the 26th year of his age; and when *Sullivan*, one of the Pretender's privy-council, like another *Ahitophel*, adviſed the rebels to give our ſoldiers battle, preſuming they were ſurfeited and over-charged with their yeſterday's rejoicings, and conſequently unfit to make any great ſtand againſt them. But, glory be to GOD, who catches the wiſe in their own craftineſs! his counſel, like *Ahitophel*'s, proves abortive. Both General and ſoldiers were prepared to meet them. "GOD taught their hands to war, and their fingers to fight," and brought the Duke, after a deſerved ſlaughter of ſome thouſands of the rebels, with moſt of his brave ſoldiers, victorious from the field.

If we then take a diſtinct view of this notable tranſaction, and trace it in all the particular circumſtances that have attended it, I believe we muſt with one heart and voice confeſs, that if it be a mercy for a ſtate to be delivered from a worſe than a *Catiline*'s conſpiracy, or a church to be reſcued from a hotter than a *Diocleſian* perſecution; if it be a mercy to be delivered from a religion that turns plough-ſhares into ſwords, and pruning-hooks into ſpears, and makes it meritorious to ſhed proteſtant blood; if it be a mercy to have all our pre-

ſent invaluable privileges, both in church and ſtate, ſecured to us more than ever; if it be a mercy to have theſe great things done for us, at a ſeaſon, when for our crying ſins, both church and ſtate juſtly deſerved to be overturned; and if it be a mercy to have all this brought about for us, under GOD, by one of the blood-royal, a prince acting with an experience far above his years; if any, or all of theſe are mercies, then have you lately commemorated one of the greateſt mercies that ever the glorious GOD vouchſafed to the *Britiſh* nation.

And ſhall we not rejoice and give thanks? Should we refuſe, would not the ſtones cry out againſt us? Rejoice then we may and ought: but, O let our rejoicing be in the LORD, and run in a religious channel. This, we find, has been the practice of GOD's people in all ages. When he was pleaſed, with a mighty hand, and out-ſtretched arm, to lead the *Iſraelites* through the *Red-Sea*, as on dry ground, "Then ſang *Moſes* and the children of *Iſrael*; and *Miriam* the propheteſs, the ſiſter of *Aaron*, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her. And *Miriam* anſwered them, Sing ye to the LORD; for he hath triumphed glorioufly." When GOD ſubdued *Jabin*, the King of *Canaan*, before the children of *Iſrael*, "then ſang *Deborah* and *Barak* on that day, ſaying, "Praiſe ye the LORD for the avenging of *Iſrael*." When the ark was brought back out of the hands of the *Philiſtines*, *David*, though a king, danced before it. And, to mention but one inſtance more, which may ſerve as a general directory to us on this and ſuch-like occaſions: when the great Head of the church had reſcued his people from the general maſſacre intended to be executed upon them by a cruel and ambitious *Haman*, "*Mordecai* ſent letters unto all the *Jews* that were in all the provinces of the King *Ahaſuerus*, both nigh and far, to eſtabliſh among them, that they ſhould keep the fourteenth day of the month *Adar*, and the fifteenth day of the ſame yearly, as the days wherein the *Jews* reſted from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from ſorrow unto joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they ſhould make them days of feaſting and joy, and of ſending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor." And why ſhould we not go and do likewiſe?

And ſhall we not alſo, on ſuch an occaſion, expreſs our gratitude to, and make honourable mention of, thoſe worthies who have ſignalized themſelves, and been ready to ſacrifice both lives and fortunes at this critical juncture?

This would be to act the part of thoſe ungrateful *Iſraelites*, who are branded in the book of GOD, for not ſhewing kindneſs to the houſe of "*Jerub-Baal*, namely *Gideon*, according to all the goodneſs which he ſhewed unto *Iſrael*." Even a *Pharaoh* could prefer a deſerving *Joſeph*, *Ahaſuerus* a *Mordecai*, and *Nebuchadnezzar* a *Daniel*, when made inſtruments of ſignal ſervice to themſelves and people. "My heart, ſays *Deborah*, is towards (*i. e.* I have a particular veneration and regard for) the Governors of *Iſrael* that offered themſelves willingly. And bleſſed above women ſhall *Jael* the wife of *Heber* the *Kenite* be; for ſhe put her hand to the nail, and her right-hand to the workman's hammer, and with the hammer ſhe ſmote *Siſera*, ſhe ſmote off his head, when ſhe had pierced and ſtricken through his temples." And ſhall we not ſay, "Bleſſed above men let his Royal Highneſs the Duke of *Cumberland* be; for through his inſtrumentality, the great and glorious JEHOVAH hath brought mighty things to paſs?" Should not our hearts be towards the worthy Archbiſhop of *York*, the Royal Hunters, and thoſe other *Engliſh* heroes who offered themſelves ſo willingly? Let the names of *Blakeney*, *Bland*, and *Rea*, and all thoſe who waxed valiant in fight on this important occaſion, live for ever in the *Britiſh* annals. And let the name of that great, that incomparable brave ſoldier of the King, and a good ſoldier of JESUS CHRIST, Colonel *Gardiner*, (excuſe me if I here drop a tear: he was my intimate friend) let his name, I ſay, be had in everlaſting remembrance.

But, after all, is there not an infinitely greater debt of gratitude and praiſe due from us, on this occaſion, to Him that is higher than the higheſt, even the King of kings and Lord of Lords, the bleſſed and only Potentate? Is it not his arm, his ſtrong and mighty arm, (what inſtruments ſoever may have been made uſe of) that hath brought us this ſalvation? And may I not therefore addreſs you, in the exulting language of the beginning of this pſalm, from which we have taken our text? "O give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him;

him; ſing pſalms unto him; talk ye of all his wondrous works; glory ye in his holy name; remember his marvellous work which he hath done."

But ſhall we put off our good and gracious benefactor with mere lip-ſervice? GOD forbid. Your worthy Governor has honoured GOD in his late excellent proclamation, and GOD will honour him. But ſhall our thanks terminate with the day? No, in no wiſe. Our text reminds us of a more noble ſacrifice, and points out to us the great end the Almighty JEHOVAH propoſes, in beſtowing ſuch ſignal favours upon a people, "That they ſhould obſerve his ſtatutes, and keep his laws."

This is the return we are all taught to pray, that we may make to the Moſt High GOD, the Father of mercies, in the daily office of our church, "That our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we may ſhew forth his praiſe, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourſelves to his ſervice, and by walking before him in holineſs and righteouſneſs all our days." O that theſe words were the real language of all that uſe them! O that there were in us ſuch a mind! How ſoon would our enemies then flee before us? And GOD, even our own GOD, would yet give us more abundant bleſſings!

And why ſhould not we "obſerve GOD's ſtatutes, and keep his laws?" Dare we ſay, that any of his commands are grievous? Is not CHRIST's yoke, to a renewed ſoul, as far as renewed, eaſy; and his burden comparatively light? May I not appeal to the moſt refined reaſoner, whether the religion of JESUS CHRIST be not a ſocial religion? Whether the Moral Law, as explained by the LORD JESUS in the goſpel, has not a natural tendency to promote the preſent good and happineſs of a whole commonwealth, ſuppoſing they were obedient to them, as well as the happineſs of every individual? From whence come wars and fighting amongſt us? From what fountain do all thoſe evils, which the preſent and paſt ages have groaned under, flow, but from a neglect of the laws and ſtatutes of our great and all-wiſe law-giver JESUS of *Nazareth*? Tell me, ye men of letters, whether *Lycurgus* or *Solon*, *Pythagoras* or *Plato*, *Ariſtotle*, *Seneca*, *Cicero*, or all the antient lawgivers and heathen moraliſts, put them all together,

gether, ever publiſhed a ſyſtem of ethics, any way worthy to be compared with the glorious ſyſtem laid down in that much deſpiſed book, (to uſe Sir *Richard Steel*'s expreſſion) emphatically called, the Scriptures? Is not the divine image and ſuperſcription written upon every precept of the goſpel? Do they not ſhine with a native intrinſic luſtre? And, though many things in them are above, yet, is there any thing contrary to the ſtricteſt laws of right reaſon? Is not JESUS CHRIST, in ſcripture, ſtiled the Word, the Logos, the Reaſon? And is not his ſervice a reaſonable ſervice? What if there be myſteries in his religion? Are they not without all controverſy great and glorious? Are they not myſteries of godlineſs, and worthy of that GOD who reveals them? Nay, is it not the greateſt myſtery, that men, who pretend to reaſon, and call themſelves philoſophers, who ſearch into the *arcana naturæ*, and conſequently find a myſtery in every blade of graſs, ſhould yet be ſo irrational as to decry all myſteries in religion? Where is the ſcribe? where is the wiſe? where is the diſputer againſt the chriſtian revelation? Does not every thing without and within us, conſpire to prove its divine original? And would not ſelf-intereſt, if there was no other motive, excite us to obſerve GOD's ſtatutes, and keep his laws?

Beſides, conſidered as a proteſtant people, do we not lie under the greateſt obligations of any nation under heaven, to pay a chearful, unanimous, univerſal, perſevering obedience to the divine commands.

The wonderful and ſurpriſing manner of GOD's bringing about a reformation, in the reign of King *Henry the Eighth*; his carrying it on in the bleſſed reign of King *Edward the Sixth*; his delivering us out of the bloody hands of Queen *Mary*, and deſtroying the *Spaniſh* invincible armada, under her immediate proteſtant ſucceſſor Queen *Elizabeth*; his diſcovery of the popiſh plot under King *James*; the glorious revolution by King *William*; and, to come nearer to our own times, his driving away four thouſand five hundred *Spaniards*, from a weak (though important) frontier colony, when they had, in a manner, actually taken poſſeſſion of it; his giving us *Louiſbourg*, one of the ſtrongeſt fortreſſes of our enemies, contrary to all human probability, but the other day, into

our hands: theſe, I ſay, with the victory which you have lately been commemorating, are ſuch national mercies, not to mention any more, as will render us utterly inexcuſable, if they do not produce a national reformation, and incite us all, with one heart, to keep GOD's ſtatutes, and obſerve his laws.

Need I remind you further, in order to excite in you a greater diligence to comply with the intent of the text, that though the ſtorm, in a great meaſure, is abated by his Royal Highneſs's late ſucceſs, yet we dare not ſay, it is altogether blown over?

The clouds may again return after the rain; and the few ſurviving rebels (which I pray GOD avert) may yet be ſuffered to make head againſt us. We are ſtill engaged in a bloody, and, in all probability, a tedious war, with two of the moſt inveterate enemies to the intereſts of *Great-Britain*. And, though I cannot help thinking, that their preſent intentions are ſo iniquitous, their conduct ſo perfidious, and their ſchemes ſo directly derogatory to the honour of the Moſt High GOD, that he will certainly humble them in the end, yet, as all things in this life happen alike to all, they may for a time, be dreadful inſtruments of ſcourging us. If not, GOD has other arrows in his quiver to ſmite us with, beſides the *French* King, his Catholick Majeſty, or an abjured Pretender. Not only the ſword, but plague, peſtilence, and famine, are under the divine command. Who knows but he may ſay to them all, "Paſs through theſe lands?" A fatal murrain has lately ſwept away abundance of cattle at home and abroad. A like epidemical diſeaſe may have a commiſſion to ſeize our perſons as well as our beaſts. Thus GOD dealt with the *Egyptians*: who dare ſay, he will not deal ſo with us? Has he not already given ſome ſymptoms of it? What great numbers upon the continent have been lately taken off by the bloody-flux, ſmall-pox, and yellow-fever? Who can tell what further judgments are yet in ſtore? However, this is certain, the rod is yet hanging over us: and I believe it will be granted on all ſides, that if ſuch various diſpenſations of mercy and judgment do not teach the inhabitants of any land to learn righteouſneſs, they will only ripen them for a greater ruin. Give me leave, therefore, to diſmiſs you at this time with that ſolemn awful warning and exhortation,

with

which the venerable *Samuel*, on a public occaſion, took
of the people of *Iſrael*: " Only fear the LORD, and
him in truth, with all your heart: for conſider how
things he hath done for you. But if ye ſhall ſtill do
dly, [I will not ſay as the Prophet did, You ſhall be
med; but] ye know not but you may provoke the
Almighty to conſume both you and your king."
ch GOD of his infinite mercy prevent, for the ſake of
s CHRIST: to whom, with the Father, and the Holy
t, three perſons, but one GOD, be all honour and
, now and for evermore. *Amen*, *Amen*.

SERMON

SERMON VII.

Thankfulneſs for Mercies received, a neceſſary Duty.

A Farewel Sermon, preached on board the *Whitaker* at Anchor near *Savannah*, in *Georgia*, *Sunday May* 17, 1738.

PSALM, cvii. 30, 31.

Then are they glad, becauſe they are at reſt, and ſo he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.

O that men would therefore praiſe the LORD *for his goodneſs, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men!*

NUMBERLESS marks does man bear in his ſoul, that he is fallen and eſtranged from GOD; but nothing gives a greater proof thereof, than that backwardneſs, which every one finds within himſelf, to the duty of praiſe and thankſgiving.

When GOD placed the firſt man in paradiſe, his ſoul no doubt was ſo filled with a ſenſe of the riches of the divine love that he was continually employing that *breath of life*, which the Almighty had not long before breathed into him, in bleſſing and magnifying that all-bountiful, all-gracious GOD in whom he lived, moved, and had his being.

And the brighteſt idea we can form of the angelical hierarchs above, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, is, that they are continually ſtanding round the throne of GOD, and ceaſe not day and night, ſaying, "Worthy art thou, O Lamb

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that waſt ſlain, to receive power and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing." *Rev.* v. 12.

That then, which was man's perfection when time firſt began, and will be his employment when death is ſwallowed up in victory, and time ſhall be no more, without controverſy, is part of our perfection, and ought to be our frequent exerciſe on earth: and I doubt not but thoſe bleſſed ſpirits, who are ſent forth to miniſter to them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation, often ſtand aſtoniſhed when they encamp around us, to find our hearts ſo rarely enlarged, and our mouths ſo ſeldom opened, to ſhew forth the loving-kindneſs of the LORD, or to ſpeak of all his praiſe.

Matter for praiſe and adoration, can never be wanting to creatures redeemed by the blood of the Son of GOD; and who have ſuch continual ſcenes of his infinite goodneſs preſented to their view, that were their ſouls duly affected with a ſenſe of his univerſal love, they could not but be continually calling on heaven and earth, men and angels, to join with them in praiſing and bleſſing that "high and lofty one, who inhabiteth eternity, who maketh his ſun to ſhine on the evil and on the good," and daily pours down his bleſſings on the whole race of mankind.

But few are arrived to ſuch a degree of charity or love, as to rejoice with thoſe that do rejoice, and to be as thankful for others mercies, as their own. This part of chriſtian perfection, though begun on earth, will be conſummated only in heaven; where our hearts will glow with ſuch fervent love towards GOD and one another, that every freſh degree of glory communicated to our neighbour, will alſo communicate to us a freſh topic of thankfulneſs and joy.

That which has the greateſt tendency to excite the generality of fallen men to praiſe and thankſgiving, is a ſenſe of GOD's private mercies, and particular benefits beſtowed upon ourſelves. For as theſe come nearer our own hearts, ſo they muſt be more affecting; and as they are peculiar proofs, whereby we may know, that GOD does in a more eſpecial manner favour us above others, ſo they cannot but ſenſibly touch us; and if our hearts are not quite frozen, like coals of a refiner's fire, they muſt melt us down into thankfulneſs and love. It was a conſideration of the diſtinguiſhing favours

GOD

GOD had ſhewn to his choſen people *Iſrael*, and the frequent and remarkable deliverances wrought by him in behalf of "thoſe who go down to the ſea in ſhips, and occupy their buſineſs in great waters," that made the holy Pſalmiſt break out ſo frequently as he does in this pſalm, into this moving, pathetical exclamation, "O that men would therefore praiſe the LORD for his goodneſs, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men!"

His expreſſing himſelf in ſo fervent a manner, implies both the importance and neglect of the duty. As when *Moſes* on another occaſion cried out, "O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would *practically* conſider their latter end!" *Deut.* xxxii. 29.

I ſay, importance and neglect of the duty; for out of thoſe many thouſands that receive bleſſings from the LORD, how few give thanks in remembrance of his holineſs? The account given us of the ungrateful lepers, is but too lively a repreſentation of the ingratitude of mankind in general; who like them, when under any humbling providence, can cry, "JESUS, Maſter, have mercy on us!" *Luke* xvii. 13. but when healed of their ſickneſs, or delivered from their diſtreſs, ſcarce one in ten can be found "returning to give thanks to GOD."

And yet as common as this ſin of ingratitude is, there is nothing we ought more earneſtly to pray againſt. For what is more abſolutely condemned in holy ſcripture than ingratitude? Or what more peremptorily required than the contrary temper? Thus ſays the Apoſtle, "Rejoice evermore; in every thing give thanks," 1 *Theſ.* v. 16, 18. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication, with thankſgiving, let your requeſts be made known unto GOD," *Phil.* iv. 6.

On the contrary, the Apoſtle mentions it as one of the higheſt crimes of the *Gentiles*, that they were not thankful. "Neither were they thankful," *Rom.* i. 21. as alſo in another place, he numbers the "unthankful," 2 *Tim.* iii. 2. amongſt thoſe unholy, prophane perſons, who are to have their portion in the lake of fire and brimſtone.

As for our ſins, GOD puts them behind his back; but his mercies he will have acknowledged, "There is virtue gone out

out of me," ſays JESUS CHRIST, *Luke* viii. 46. and the woman who was cured of her bloody iſſue, muſt confeſs it. And we generally find, when GOD ſent any remarkable puniſhment upon a particular perſon, he reminded him of the favours he had received, as ſo many aggravations of his ingratitude. Thus when GOD was about to viſit *Eli*'s houſe, he thus expoſtulates with him by his prophet: "Did I plainly appear unto the houſe of thy fathers, when they were in *Egypt*, in *Pharaoh*'s houſe? And did I chuſe him out of all the tribes of *Iſrael*, to be my prieſt, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incenſe, and to wear an ephod before me? Wherefore kick ye at my ſacrifice, and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation, and honoureſt thy ſons above me, to make yourſelves fat with the chiefeſt of all the offerings of *Iſrael* my people? Wherefore the LORD GOD of *Iſrael* ſaith, I ſaid indeed, that thy houſe, and the houſe of thy father, ſhould walk before me for ever; but now the LORD ſaith, Be it far from me, for them that honour me will I honour, and they that deſpiſe me ſhall be lightly eſteemed." 1 *Sam.* ii. 27, 28, 29, 30.

It was this and ſuch like inſtances of GOD's ſeverity againſt the unthankful, that inclined me to chuſe the words of the text, as the moſt proper ſubject I could diſcourſe on at this time.

Four months, my good friends, we have now been upon the ſea in this ſhip, and "have occupied our buſineſs in the great waters." At GOD Almighty's word, we have ſeen "the ſtormy wind ariſe, which hath lifted up the waves thereof." We have been carried up to the heaven, and down again to the deep, and ſome of our ſouls melted away becauſe of the trouble; but I truſt we cryed earneſtly unto the LORD, and he delivered us out of our diſtreſs. For he made the ſtorm to ceaſe; ſo that the waves thereof were ſtill. And now we are glad, becauſe we are at reſt, for GOD hath brought us to the haven where we would be. O that you would therefore praiſe the LORD for his goodneſs, and declare the wonders that he hath done for us, the unworthieſt of the ſons of men."

Thus *Moſes*, thus *Joſhua* behaved. For when they were about to take their leaves of the children of *Iſrael*, they re-

counted to them what great things GOD had done for them, as the beſt arguments and motives they could urge to engage them to obedience. And how can I copy after better examples? What fitter, what more noble motives, to holineſs and purity of living, can I lay before you, than they did?

Indeed, I cannot ſay, that we have ſeen the "pillar of a cloud by day, or a pillar of fire by night," going viſibly before us to guide our courſe; but this I can ſay, that the ſame GOD who was in that pillar of a cloud, and pillar of fire, which departed not from the *Iſraelites*, and who has made the ſun to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night, has, by his good providence, directed us in our right way, or elſe the pilot had ſteered us in vain.

Neither can I ſay, That we have ſeen the "ſun ſtand ſtill," as the children of *Iſrael* did in the days of *Joſhua*. But ſurely GOD, during part of our voyage, has cauſed it to withhold ſome of that heat, which it uſually ſends forth in theſe warmer climates, or elſe it had not failed, but ſome of you muſt have periſhed in the ſickneſs that has been, and does yet continue among us.

We have not ſeen the waters ſtand purpoſely on an heap, that we might paſs through, neither have we been purſued by *Pharaoh* and his hoſt, and delivered out of their hands; but we have been led through the ſea as through a wilderneſs, and were once remarkably preſerved from being run down by another ſhip; which had GOD permitted, the waters, in all probability, would immediately have overwhelmed us, and like *Pharaoh* and his hoſt, we ſhould have ſunk, as ſtones, into the ſea.

We may, indeed, atheiſt like, aſcribe all theſe things to natural cauſes, and ſay, "Our own ſkill and foreſight has brought us hither in ſafety." But as certainly as JESUS CHRIST, the angel of the covenant, in the days of his fleſh, walked upon the water, and ſaid to his ſinking diſciples, "Be not afraid, it is I," ſo ſurely has the ſame everlaſting I AM, "who decketh himſelf with light as with a garment, who ſpreadeth out the heavens like a curtain, who claſpeth the winds in his fiſt, who holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hands," and guided the wiſe men by a ſtar in the eaſt; ſo ſurely, I ſay, has he ſpoken, and at his command the winds have

have blown us where we are now arrived. For his providence ruleth all things; "Wind and ſtorms obey his word:" he ſaith to it at one time, Go, and it goeth; at another, Come, and it cometh; and at a third time, Blow this way, and it bloweth.

It is he, my brethren, and not we ourſelves, that has of late ſent us ſuch proſperous gales, and made us to ride, as it were, on the wings of the wind, into the haven where we would be.

"O that you would therefore praiſe the LORD for his goodneſs," and by your lives declare, that you are truly thankful for the wonders he had ſhewn to us, who are leſs than the leaſt of the ſons of men.

I ſay, declare it by your lives. For to give him thanks, barely with your lips, while your hearts are far from him, is but a mock ſacrifice, nay, an abomination unto the LORD.

This was the end, the royal Pſalmiſt ſays, GOD had in view, when he ſhewed ſuch wonders, from time to time, to the people of *Iſrael*, "That they might keep his ſtatutes, and obſerve his laws," *Pſalm* cv. 44. and this, my good friends, is the end GOD would have accompliſhed in us, and the only return he deſires us to make him, for all the benefits he hath conferred upon us.

O then, let me beſeech you, give to GOD your hearts, your whole hearts; and ſuffer yourſelves to be drawn by the cords of infinite love, to honour and obey him.

Aſſure yourſelves you can never ſerve a better maſter; for his ſervice is perfect freedom; his yoke, when worn a little while, is exceeding eaſy, his burden light; and in keeping his commandments there is great reward; love, peace, joy in the Holy Ghoſt here, and a crown of glory that fadeth not away, hereafter.

You may, indeed, let other lords have dominion over you, and Satan may promiſe to give you all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, if you will fall down and worſhip him; but he is a liar, and was ſo from the beginning; he has not ſo much to give you, as you may tread on with the ſole of your foot; or could he give you the whole world, yet, that could not make you happy without GOD. It is GOD alone, my brethren, whoſe we are, in whoſe name I

now ſpeak, and who has of late ſhewed us ſuch mercies in the deep, that can give ſolid laſting happineſs to your ſouls; and he for this reaſon only deſires your hearts, becauſe without him you muſt be miſerable.

Suffer me not then to go away without my errand; as it is the laſt time I ſhall ſpeak to you, let me not ſpeak in vain; but let a ſenſe of the divine goodneſs lead you to repentance.

Even *Saul*, that abandoned wretch, when *David* ſhewed him his ſkirt, which he had cut off, when he might have alſo taken his life, was ſo melted down with his kindneſs, that he lifted up his voice and wept. And we muſt have hearts harder than *Saul*'s, nay, harder than the nether milſtone, if a ſenſe of GOD's late loving kindneſſes, notwithſtanding he might ſo often have deſtroyed us, does not even compel us to lay down our arms againſt him, and become his faithful ſervants and ſoldiers unto our lives end.

If they have not this effect upon us, we ſhall, of all men, be moſt miſerable; for GOD is juſt, as well as merciful; and the more bleſſings we have received here, the greater damnation, if we do not improve them, ſhall we incur hereafter.

But GOD forbid that any of thoſe ſhould ever ſuffer the vengeance of eternal fire, amongſt whom, I have, for theſe four months, been preaching the goſpel of CHRIST; but yet thus muſt it be, if you do not improve the divine mercies: and inſtead of your being my crown of rejoicing in the day of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, I muſt appear as a ſwift witneſs against you.

But, brethren, I am perſuaded better things of you, and things that accompany ſalvation, though I thus ſpeak.

Bleſſed be GOD, ſome marks of a partial reformation at leaſt, have been viſible amongſt all you that are ſoldiers. And my weak, though ſincere endeavours, to build you up in the knowledge and fear of GOD, have not been altogether in vain in the LORD.

Swearing, I hope is, in a great meaſure, abated with you, and GOD, I truſt, has bleſſed his late viſitations, by making them the means of awakening your conſciences, to a more ſolicitous enquiry about the things which belong to your everlaſting peace.

Full

Fulfil you then my joy, by continuing thus minded, and labour to go on to perfection. For I ſhall have no greater pleaſure than to ſee, or hear, that you walk in the truth.

Conſider, my good friends, you are now, as it were, entering on a new world, where you will be ſurrounded with multitudes of heathens; and if you take not heed to "have your converſation honeſt amongſt them," and to "walk worthy of the holy vocation wherewith you are called," you will act the helliſh part of *Herod*'s ſoldiers over again; and cauſe CHRIST's religion, as they did his perſon, to be had in deriſion of thoſe that are round about you.

Conſider further, what peculiar privileges you have enjoyed, above many others that are entering on the ſame land. They have had, as it were, a famine of the word, but you have rather been in danger of being ſurfeited with your ſpiritual manna. And, therefore, as more inſtructions have been given you, ſo from you, men will moſt juſtly expect the greater improvement in goodneſs.

Indeed, I cannot ſay, I have diſcharged my duty towards you as I ought. No, I am ſenſible of many faults in my miniſterial office, and for which I have not failed, nor, I hope, ever ſhall fail, to humble myſelf in ſecret before GOD. However, this I can ſay, that except a few days that have been ſpent neceſſarily on other perſons, whom GOD immediately called me to write and miniſter unto, and the two laſt weeks wherein I have been confined by ſickneſs; all the while I have been aboard, I have been either actually engaged in, or preparing myſelf for inſtructing you. And though you are now to be committed to the care of another (whoſe labours I heartily beſeech GOD to bleſs amongſt you) yet I truſt I ſhall, at all ſeaſons, if need be, willingly ſpend, and be ſpent, for the good of your ſouls, though the more abundantly I love you, the leſs I ſhould be loved.

As for your military affairs, I have nothing to do with them. Fear GOD, and you muſt honour the King. Nor am I well acquainted with the nature of that land which you are now come over to protect; only this I may venture to affirm in the general, that you muſt neceſſarily expect upon your arrival at a new colony, to meet with many difficulties. But your very profeſſion teaches you to endure hardſhip; "be not,

therefore, faint-hearted, but quit yourſelves like men, and be ſtrong," *Numb.* xiv. Be not like thoſe cowardly perſons, who were affrighted at the report of the falſe ſpies, that came and ſaid, that there were people tall as the *Anakims* to be grappled with, but be ye like unto *Caleb* and *Joſhua*, all heart; and ſay, we will act valiantly, for we ſhall be more than conquerors over all difficulties through JESUS CHRIST that loved us. Above all things, my brethren, take heed, and beware of murmuring, like the perverſe *Iſraelites*, againſt thoſe that are ſet over you; and "learn, whatſoever ſtate you ſhall be in, therewith to be content," *Phil.* iv. 11.

As I have ſpoken to you, I hope your wives alſo will ſuffer the word of exhortation,

Your behaviour on ſhipboard, eſpecially the firſt part of the voyage, I chuſe to throw a cloak over; for to uſe the mildeſt terms, it was not ſuch as became the goſpel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. However, of late, bleſſed be GOD, you have taken more heed to your ways, and ſome of you have walked all the while, as became "women profeſſing godlineſs." Let thoſe accept my hearty thanks, and permit me to intreat you all in general, as you are all now married, to remember the ſolemn vow you made at your entrance into the marriage ſtate, and ſee that you be ſubject to your own huſbands, in every lawful thing: Beg of GOD to keep the door of your lips, that you offend not with your tongues; and walk in love, that your prayers be not hindered. You that have children, let it be your chief concern to breed them up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD. And live all of you ſo holy and unblameable, that you may not ſo much as be ſuſpected to be unchaſte; and as ſome of you have imitated *Mary Magdalen* in her ſin, ſtrive to imitate her alſo in her repentance.

As for you, ſailors, what ſhall I ſay? How ſhall I addreſs myſelf to you? How ſhall I do that which I ſo much long to do; touch your hearts? Gratitude obliges me to wiſh thus well to you. For you have often taught me many inſtructive leſſons, and reminded me to put up many prayers to GOD for you, that you might receive your ſpiritual ſight.

When I have ſeen you preparing for a ſtorm, and reefing your ſails to guard againſt it; how have I wiſhed that you and I were as careful to avoid that ſtorm of GOD's wrath,

which will certainly, without repentance, quickly overtake us? When I have obſerved you catch at every fair gale, how have I ſecretly cried, O that we were as careful to know the things that belong to our peace, before they are for ever hid from our eyes! And when I have taken notice, how ſteadily you eyed your compaſs in order to ſteer aright, how have I wiſhed, that we as ſteadily eyed the word of GOD, which alone can preſerve us from "making ſhipwreck of faith, and a good conſcience?" In ſhort, there is ſcarce any thing you do, which has not been a leſſon of inſtruction to me; and, therefore, it would be ungrateful in me, did I not take this opportunity of exhorting you in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, to be as wiſe in the things which concern your ſoul, as I have obſerved you to be in the affairs belonging to your ſhip.

I am ſenſible, that the ſea is reckoned but an ill ſchool to learn CHRIST in: and to ſee a devout ſailor, is eſteemed as uncommon a thing, as to ſee a *Saul* amongſt the prophets. But whence this wondering? Whence this looking upon a godly ſailor, as a man to be wondered at, as a ſpeckled bird in the creation? I am ſure, for the little time I have come in and out amongſt you, and as far as I can judge from the little experience I have had of things, I ſcarce know any way of life, that is capable of greater improvements than yours.

The continual danger you are in of being overwhelmed by the great waters; the many opportunities you have of beholding GOD's wonders in the deep; the happy retirement you enjoy from worldly temptations; and the daily occaſions that are offered you, to endure hardſhips, are ſuch noble means of promoting the ſpiritual life, that were your hearts bent towards GOD, you would account it your happineſs, that his providence has called you, to "go down to the ſea in ſhips, and to occupy your buſineſs in the great waters."

The royal Pſalmiſt knew this, and, therefore, in the words of the text, calls more eſpecially on men of your employ, to "praiſe the LORD for his goodneſs, and declare the wonders he doth for the children of men."

And O that you would be wiſe in time, and hearken to his voice to-day, "whilſt it is called to-day!" For ye yourſelves

know how little is to be done on a ſick bed. GOD has, in an eſpecial manner, of late, invited you to repentance: two of your crew he has taken off by death, and moſt of you he has mercifully viſited with a grievous ſickneſs. The terrors of the LORD have been upon you, and when burnt with a ſcorching fever, ſome of you have cried out, "What ſhall we do to be ſaved?" Remember then the reſolutions you made, when you thought GOD was about to take away your ſouls; and ſee that according to your promiſes, you ſhew forth your thankfulneſs, not only with your lips, but in your lives. For though GOD may bear long, he will not forbear always; and if theſe ſignal mercies and judgments do not lead you to repentance, aſſure yourſelves there will at laſt come a fiery tempeſt, from the preſence of the LORD, which will ſweep away you, and all other adverſaries of GOD.

I am poſitive, neither you nor the ſoldiers have wanted, nor will want any manner of encouragement to piety and holineſs of living, from thoſe two perſons who have here the government over you; for they have been ſuch helps to me in my miniſtry, and have ſo readily concurred in every thing for your good, that they may juſtly demand a public acknowledgment of thanks both from you and me.

Permit me, my honoured friends, in the name of both claſſes of your people, to return you hearty thanks for the care and tenderneſs you have expreſſed for the welfare of their better parts.

As for the private favours you have ſhewn to my perſon, I hope ſo deep a ſenſe of them is imprinted on my heart, that I ſhall plead them before GOD in prayer, as long as I live.

But I have ſtill ſtronger obligations to intercede in your behalf. For GOD, ever adored be his free grace in CHRIST JESUS! has ſet his ſeal to my miniſtry in your hearts. Some diſtant pangs of the new-birth I have obſerved to come upon you; and GOD forbid that I ſhould ſin againſt the LORD, by ceaſing to pray, that the good work begun in your ſouls, may be carried on till the day of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The time of our departure from each other is now at hand, and you are going out into a world of temptations. But though abſent in body, let us be preſent with each other in ſpirit; and GOD, I truſt, will enable you to be ſingularly good, to be

ready to be accounted fools for CHRIST's ſake; and then we ſhall meet never to part again in the kingdom of our Father which is in heaven.

To you, my companions and familiar friends, who came over with me to ſojourn in a ſtrange land, do I in the next place addreſs myſelf. For you I eſpecially fear, as well as for myſelf; becauſe as we take ſweet counſel together oftner than others, and as you are let into a more intimate friendſhip with me in private life, the eyes of all men will be upon you to note even the minuteſt miſcarriage; and, therefore, it highly concerns you to "walk circumſpectly towards thoſe that are without," I hope, that nothing but a ſingle eye to GOD's glory and the ſalvation of your own ſouls, brought you from your native country. Remember then the end of your coming hither, and you can never do amiſs. Be patterns of induſtry, as well as of piety, to thoſe who ſhall be around you; and above all things let us have ſuch fervent charity amongſt ourſelves, that it may be ſaid of us, as of the primitive chriſtians, "See how the chriſtians love one another."

And now I have been ſpeaking to others particularly, I have one general requeſt to make to all, and that with reference to myſelf.

You have heard, my dear friends, how I have been exhorting every one of you to ſhew forth your thankfulneſs for the divine goodneſs, not only with your lips, but in your lives: But "phyſician heal thyſelf," may juſtly be retorted on me. For (without any falſe pretences to humility) I find my own heart ſo little inclined to this duty of thankſgiving for the benefits I have received, that I had need fear ſharing *Hezekiah*'s fate, who becauſe he was lifted up by, and not thankful enough for, the great things GOD had done for him, was given up a prey to the pride of his own heart.

I need, therefore, and beg your moſt importunate petitions at the throne of grace, that no ſuch evil may befal me; that the more GOD exalts me, the more I may debaſe myſelf; and that after I have preached to others, I myſelf may not be caſt away.

And now, brethren, into GOD's hands I commend your ſpirits, who, I truſt, through his infinite mercies in CHRIST JESUS,

JESUS, will preſerve you blameleſs, till his ſecond coming to judge the world.

Excuſe my detaining you ſo long; perhaps it is the laſt time I ſhall ſpeak to you: my heart is full, and out of the abundance of it, I could continue my diſcourſe until midnight. But I muſt away to your new world; may GOD give you new hearts, and enable you to put in practice what you have heard from time to time, to be your duty, and I need not wiſh you any thing better. For then GOD will ſo bleſs you, that "you will build you cities to dwell in; then will you ſow your lands and plant vineyards, which will yield you fruits of increaſe," *Pſal.* cvii. 36, 37. "Then your oxen ſhall be ſtrong to labour, there ſhall be no leading into captivity, and no complaining in your ſtreets; then ſhall your ſons grow up as thy young plants, and your daughters be as the poliſhed corners of the temple: then ſhall your garners be full and plenteous with all manner of ſtore, and your ſheep bring forth thouſands, and ten thouſands in your ſtreets," *Pſal.* cxliv. In ſhort, then ſhall the LORD be your GOD; and as ſurely as he has now brought us to this haven, where we would be, ſo ſurely, after we have paſt through the ſtorms and tempeſts of this troubleſome world, will he bring us to the haven of eternal reſt, where we ſhall have nothing to do, but to praiſe him for ever for his goodneſs, and declare, in never-ceaſing ſongs of praiſe, the wonders he has done for us, and all the other ſons of men.

"To which bleſſed reſt, GOD of his infinite mercy bring
"us all, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD! to whom
"with the Father and Holy Ghoſt be all honour and
"glory, might, majeſty, and dominion, now, henceforth,
"and for evermore. *Amen, Amen.*"

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

The Neceſſity and Benefits of Religious Society.

ECCLES. iv. 9, 10, 11, 12.

Two are better than One, becauſe they have a good Reward for their Labour.

For if they fall, the One will lift up his Fellow: But woe be to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

Again, if Two lie together, then they have heat; but how can One be warm alone?

And if One prevail againſt him, Two ſhall withſtand him; and a threefold Cord is not quickly broken.

AMONG the many reaſons aſſignable for the ſad decay of *true chriſtianity*, perhaps the neglecting to aſſemble ourſelves together, in *religious ſocieties*, may not be one of the leaſt. That I may therefore do my endeavour towards promoting ſo excellent a means of piety, I have ſelected a paſſage of ſcripture drawn from the experience of the wiſeſt of men, which being a little enlarged on and illuſtrated, will fully anſwer my preſent deſign; being to ſhew, in the beſt manner I can, the neceſſity and benefits of ſociety in general, and of religious ſociety in particular.

"Two are better than one, &c."

From which words I ſhall take occaſion to prove,

Firſt, The truth of the wiſe man's aſſertion, "Two are better than one," and that in reference to ſociety in general, and religious ſociety in particular.

Secondly,

Secondly, To aſſign ſome reaſons why two are better than one, eſpecially as to the laſt particular. 1. Becauſe men can raiſe up one another when they chance to ſlip: "For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow." 2. Becauſe they can impart heat to each other: "Again, if two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone?" 3. Becauſe they can ſecure each other from thoſe that do oppoſe them: "And if one prevail againſt him, two ſhall withſtand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken." From hence,

Thirdly, I ſhall take occaſion to ſhew the duty incumbent on every member of a *religious ſociety*.

And *Fourthly*, I ſhall draw an inference or two from what may be ſaid; and then conclude with a word or two of exhortation.

Firſt, I am to prove the truth of the wiſe man's aſſertion, that "two are better than one," and that in reference to ſociety in general, and religious ſocieties in particular.

And how can this be done better, than by ſhewing that it is abſolutely neceſſary for the welfare both of the bodies and ſouls of men? Indeed, if we look upon man as he came out of the hands of his Maker, we imagine him to be perfect, entire, lacking nothing. But GOD, whoſe thoughts are not as our thoughts, ſaw ſomething ſtill wanting to make *Adam* happy. And what was that? Why, an help meet for him. For thus ſpeaketh the ſcripture: "And the LORD GOD ſaid, It is not good that the man ſhould be alone, I will make an help meet for him."

Obſerve, GOD ſaid, "It is not good," thereby implying that the creation would have been imperfect, in ſome ſort, unleſs an help was found out meet for *Adam*. And if this was the caſe of man before the fall; if an help was meet for him in a ſtate of perfection; ſurely ſince the fall, when we come naked and helpleſs out of our mother's womb, when our wants increaſe with our years, and we can ſcarcely ſubſiſt a day without the mutual aſſiſtance of each other, well may we ſay, "It is not good for man to be alone."

Society then, we ſee, is abſolutely neceſſary in reſpect to our bodily and perſonal wants. If we carry our view farther,

and

id conſider mankind as divided into different cities, coun-ies, and nations, the neceſſity of it will appear yet more evi-ent. For how can communities be kept up, or commerce arried on, without ſociety? Certainly not at all, ſince pro-idence ſeems wiſely to have aſſigned a particular product to lmoſt each particular country, on purpoſe, as it were, to oblige us to be ſocial; and hath ſo admirably mingled the parts of the whole body of mankind together, "that the eye cannot ſay to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the hand to the foot, I have no need of thee."

Many other inſtances might be given of the neceſſity of ſociety, in reference to our bodily, perſonal, and national wants. But what are all theſe when weighed in the balance of the ſanctuary, in compariſon of the infinite greater need of it, with reſpect to the ſoul? It was chiefly in regard to this better part, no doubt, that GOD ſaid, "It is not good for the man to be alone." For, let us ſuppoſe *Adam* to be as happy as may be, placed as the Lord of the creation in the paradiſe of GOD, and ſpending all his hours in adoring and praiſing the bleſſed Author of his being; yet as his ſoul was the very copy of the divine nature, whoſe peculiar property it is to be com-municative, without the divine all-ſufficiency he could not be compleatly happy, becauſe he was alone and incommunicative, nor even content in paradiſe, for want of a partner in his joys. GOD knew this, and therefore ſaid, "It is not good that the man ſhall be alone, I will make a help meet for him." And though this proved a fatal means of his falling; yet that was not owing to any natural conſequence of ſociety; but partly to that curſed apoſtate, who craftily lies in wait to deceive; partly to *Adam*'s own folly, in rather chuſing to be miſerable with one he loved, than truſt in GOD to raiſe him up another ſpouſe.

If we reflect indeed on that familiar intercourſe, our firſt parent could carry on with heaven, in a ſtate of innocence, we ſhall be apt to think he had as little need of ſociety, as to his ſoul, as before we ſuppoſed him to have, in reſpect to his body. But yet, as GOD and the holy angels were ſo far above him on the one hand, and the beaſts ſo far beneath him on the other, there was nothing like having one to converſe with, who was "bone of his bone, and fleſh of his fleſh."

Man,

Man, then, could not be fully happy, we ſee, even in paradiſe, without a companion of his own ſpecies, much leſs now he is driven out. For, let us view him a little in his natural eſtate now, ſince the fall, as "having his underſtanding darkened, his mind alienated from the life of GOD;" as no more able to ſee his way wherein he ſhould go, than a blind man to deſcribe the ſun: that notwithſtanding this, he muſt receive his ſight ere he can ſee GOD: and that if he never ſees him, he never can be happy. Let us view him in this light (or rather this darkneſs) and deny the neceſſity of ſociety if we can. A divine revelation we find is abſolutely neceſſary, we being by nature as unable to know, as we are to do our duty. And how ſhall we learn except one teach us? But was GOD to do this himſelf, how ſhould we, but with *Moſes*, exceedingly quake and fear? Nor would the miniſtry of angels in this affair, be without too much terror. It is neceſſary, therefore (at leaſt GOD's dealing with us hath ſhewed it to be ſo) that we ſhould be drawn with the cords of a man. And that a divine revelation being granted, we ſhould uſe one another's aſſiſtance, under GOD, to inſtruct each other in the knowledge, and to exhort one another to the practice of thoſe things which belong to our everlaſting peace. This is undoubtedly the great end of ſociety intended by GOD ſince the fall, and a ſtrong argument it is, why "two are better than one," and why we ſhould "not forſake the aſſembling ourſelves together."

But farther, let us conſider ourſelves as chriſtians, as having this natural veil, in ſome meaſure, taken off from our eyes by the aſſiſtance of GOD's holy Spirit, and ſo enabled to ſee what he requires of us. Let us ſuppoſe ourſelves in ſome degree to have taſted the good word of life, and to have felt the powers of the world to come, influencing and moulding our ſouls into a religious frame: to be fully and heartily convinced that we are ſoldiers liſted under the banner of CHRIST, and to have proclaimed open war at our baptiſm, againſt the world, the fleſh, and the devil; and have, perhaps, frequently renewed our obligations ſo to do, by partaking of the LORD's ſupper: that we are ſurrounded with millions of foes without, and infeſted with a legion of enemies within: that we are commanded to ſhine as lights in the world, in the midſt of a crooked

ɔoked and perverſe generation: that we are travelling to a ıg eternity, and need all imaginable helps to ſhew, and enurage us in our way thither. Let us, I ſay, reflect on all is, and then how ſhall each of us cry out, brethren, what neceſſary thing it is to meet together in religious ſocieties?

The primitive chriſtians were fully ſenſible of this, and ıerefore we find them continually keeping up communion ith each other: for what ſays the ſcripture? They conınued ſtedfaſtly in the apoſtle's doctrine and fellowſhip, *Acts* ii. 2. *Peter* and *John* were no ſooner diſmiſſed by the great counil, than they haſte away to their companions. "And being et at liberty they came to their own, and told them all theſe hings which the high prieſt had ſaid unto them," *Acts* iv. 23. *Paul*, as ſoon as converted, "tarried three days with the diſiples that were at *Damaſcus*," *Acts* ix. 19. And *Peter* afterards, when releaſed from priſon, immediately goes to the louſe of *Mary*, where there were "great multitudes aſſemıled, praying," *Acts* xii. 12. And it is reported of the hriſtians in after-ages, that they uſed to aſſemble together ɔefore day-light, to ſing a pſalm to CHRIST as GOD. So ɔrecious was the *Communion of Saints* in thoſe days.

If it be aſked, what advantages we ſhall reap from ſuch a ɔrocedure now? I anſwer, much every way. "Two are ɔetter than one, becauſe they have a good reward for their abour: for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe be to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not nother to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then hey have heat; but how can one be warm alone? And if ɔne prevail againſt him, two ſhall withſtand him; and a hreefold cord is not quickly broken."

Which directly leads me to my Second general head, under which I was to aſſign ſome reaſons why "two are better than one," eſpecially in *Religious Society*.

1. As man in his preſent condition cannot always ſtand upright, but by reaſon of the frailty of his nature cannot but fall; one eminent reaſon why two are better than one, or, in other words, one great advantage of religious ſociety is, "That when they fall, the one will lift up his fellow.

And

And an excellent reaſon this, indeed! For alas! when we reflect how prone we are to be drawn into error in our judgments, and into vice in our practice; and how unable, at leaſt how very unwilling, to eſpy or correct our own miſcarriages; when we conſider how apt the world is to flatter us in our faults, and how few there are ſo kind as to tell us the truth; what an ineſtimable privilege muſt it be to have a ſet of true, judicious, hearty friends about us, continually watching over our ſouls, to inform us where we have fallen, and to warn us that we fall not again for the future. Surely it is ſuch a privilege, that (to uſe the words of an eminent chriſtian) we ſhall never know the value thereof, till we come to glory.

But this is not all; for ſuppoſing that we could always ſtand upright, yet whoſoever reflects on the difficulties of religion in general, and his own propenſity to lukewarmneſs and indifference in particular, will find that he muſt be zealous as well as ſteady, if ever he expects to enter the kingdom of heaven. Here, then, the wiſe man points out to us another excellent reaſon why two are better than one: "Again, if two lye together, then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone?" Which was the next thing to be conſidered.

2. A ſecond reaſon why two are better than one, is becauſe they can impart heat to each other.

It is an obſervation no leſs true than common, that kindled coals, if placed aſunder, ſoon go out, but if heaped together, quicken and enliven each other, and afford a laſting heat. The ſame will hold good in the caſe now before us. If chriſtians kindled by the grace of GOD, unite, they will quicken and enliven each other; but if they ſeparate and keep aſunder, no marvel if they ſoon grow cool or tepid. If two or three meet together in CHRIST's name, they will have heat: but how can one be warm alone?

Obſerve, "How can one be warm alone?" The wiſe man's expreſſing himſelf by way of queſtion, implies an impoſſibility, at leaſt a very great difficulty, to be warm in religion without company, where it may be had. Behold here then, another excellent benefit flowing from religious ſociety.

it will keep us zealous, as well as ſteady, in the ways of godlineſs.

But to illuſtrate this a little farther by a compariſon or two. Let us look upon ourſelves (as was above hinted) as ſoldiers liſted under CHRIST's banner; as going out with "ten thouſand, to meet one that cometh againſt us with twenty thouſand;" as perſons that are to "wreſtle not only with fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities, againſt powers, and ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places." And then tell me, all ye that fear GOD, if it be not an invaluable privilege to have a company of fellow ſoldiers continually about us, animating and exhorting each other to ſtand our ground, to keep our ranks, and manfully to follow the captain of our ſalvation, though it be through a ſea of blood?

Let us conſider ourſelves in another view before mentioned, as perſons travelling to a long eternity; as reſcued by the free grace of GOD, in ſome meaſure, from our natural *Egyptian* bondage, and marching under the conduct of our ſpiritual *Joſhua*, through the wilderneſs of this world, to the land of our heavenly *Canaan*. Let us farther reflect how apt we are to ſtartle at every difficulty; to cry, "There are lions! There are lions in the way! There are the ſons of *Anak*" to be grappled with, ere we can poſſeſs the promiſed land: How prone we are, with *Lot*'s wife, to look wiſhfully back on our ſpiritual *Sodom*, or, with the fooliſh *Iſraelites*, to long again for the fleſh-pots of *Egypt*; and to return to our former natural ſtate of bondage and ſlavery. Conſider this, my brethren, and ſee what a bleſſed privilege it will be to have a ſet of *Iſraelites* indeed about us, always reminding us of the folly of any ſuch cowardly deſign, and of the intolerable miſery we ſhall run into, if we fall in the leaſt ſhort of the promiſed land.

More might be ſaid on this particular, did not the limits of a diſcourſe of this nature oblige me to haſten,

3. To give a third reaſon, mentioned by the wiſe man in the text, why two are better than one; becauſe they can ſecure each other from enemies without. "And if one prevail againſt him, yet two ſhall withſtand him: and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

Hitherto we have conſidered the advantages of religious ſocieties, as a great preſervative againſt falling (at leaſt dan-

gerouſly falling) into ſin and lukewarmneſs, and that too from our own corruptions. But what ſays the wiſe ſon of *Sirach*? "My ſon, when thou goeſt to ſerve the LORD, prepare thy ſoul for temptation:" and that not only from inward, but outward foes; particularly from thoſe two grand adverſaries, the world and the devil: for no ſooner will thine eye be bent heavenward, but the former will be immediately diverting it another way, telling thee thou needeſt not be ſingular in order to be religious; that you may be a chriſtian without going ſo much out of the common road.

Nor will the devil be wanting in his artful inſinuations, or impious ſuggeſtions, to divert or terrify thee from preſſing forwards, "that thou mayſt lay hold on the crown of life." And if he cannot prevail this way, he will try another; and, in order to make his temptation the more undiſcerned, but withal more ſucceſsful, he will employ, perhaps, ſome of thy neareſt relatives, or moſt powerful friends, (as he ſet *Peter* on our bleſſed Maſter) who will always be bidding thee to ſpare thyſelf; telling thee thou needeſt not take ſo much pains; that it is not ſo difficult a matter to get to heaven as ſome people would make of it, nor the way ſo narrow as others imagine it to be.

But ſee here the advantage of religious company; for ſuppoſing thou findeſt thyſelf thus ſurrounded on every ſide, and unable to withſtand ſuch horrid (though ſeemingly friendly) counſels, haſte away to thy companions, and they will teach thee a truer and better leſſon; they will tell thee, that thou muſt be ſingular if thou wilt be religious; and that it is as impoſſible for a chriſtian, as for a city ſet upon a hill, to be hidden: that if thou wilt be an almoſt chriſtian (and as good be none at all) thou mayeſt live in the ſame idle, indifferent manner as thou ſeeſt moſt other people do: but if thou wilt be not only almoſt, but altogether a chriſtian, they will inform thee thou muſt go a great deal farther: that thou muſt not only faintly ſeek, but "earneſtly ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate:" that there is but one way now to heaven as formerly, even through the narrow paſſage of a ſound converſion: and that in order to bring about this mighty work, thou muſt undergo a conſtant, but neceſſary diſcipline of faſting, watching, and prayer. And therefore, the only reaſon why thoſe

friends

friends give thee ſuch advice, is, becauſe they are not willing to take ſo much pains themſelves; or, as our Saviour told *Peter* on a like occaſion, becauſe they "ſavour not the things that be of GOD, but the things that be of men."

This then, is another excellent bleſſing ariſing from religious ſociety, that friends can hereby ſecure each other from thoſe who oppoſe them. The devil is fully ſenſible of this, and therefore he has always done his utmoſt to ſuppreſs, and put a ſtop to the communion of ſaints. This was his grand artifice at the firſt planting of the goſpel; to perſecute the profeſſors of it, in order to ſeparate them. Which, though GOD, as he always will, over-ruled for the better; yet, it ſhews, what an enmity he has againſt chriſtians aſſembling themſelves together. Nor has he yet left off his old ſtratagem; it being his uſual way to entice us by ourſelves, in order to tempt us; where, by being deſtitute of one another's help, he hopes to lead us captive at his will.

But, on the contrary, knowing his own intereſt is ſtrengthened by ſociety, he would firſt perſuade us to neglect the communion of ſaints, and then bid us "ſtand in the way "of ſinners," hoping thereby to put us into the ſeat of the ſcornful. *Judas* and *Peter* are melancholy inſtances of this. The former had no ſooner left his company at ſupper, but he went out and betrayed his maſter: and the diſmal downfal of the latter, when he would venture himſelf amongſt a company of enemies, plainly ſhews us what the devil will endeavour to do, when he gets us by ourſelves. Had *Peter* kept his own company, he might have kept his integrity; but a ſingle cord, alas! how quickly was it broken? Our bleſſed Saviour knew this full well, and therefore it is very obſervable, that he always ſent out his diſciples "two by two."

And now, after ſo many advantages to be reaped from religious ſociety, may we not very juſtly cry out with the wiſe man in my text, "Woe be to him that is alone; for when he falleth, he hath not another to lift him up?" When he is cold, he hath not a friend to warm him; when he is aſſaulted, he hath not a ſecond to help him to withſtand his enemy.

III. I now come to my third general head, under which was to be ſhewn the ſeveral duties incumbent on every

member of a religious ſociety, as ſuch, which are three 1. Mutual reproof; 2. Mutual exhortation; 3. Mutual aſſiſting and defending each other.

1. *Mutual reproof.* "Two are better than one; for when they fall, the one will lift up his fellow."

Now, reproof may be taken either in a more extenſive ſenſe, and then it ſignifies our raiſing a brother by the gentleſt means, when he falls into ſin and error; or in a more reſtrained ſignification, as reaching no farther than thoſe miſcarriages, which unavoidably happen in the moſt holy men living.

The wiſe man, in the text, ſuppoſes all of us ſubject to both: "For when they fall (thereby implying that each of us may fall) the one will lift up his fellow." From whence we may infer, that "when any brother is overtaken with a fault, he that is ſpiritual (that is, regenerate, and knows the corruption and weakneſs of human nature) ought to reſtore ſuch a one in the ſpirit of meekneſs." And why he ſhould do ſo, the apoſtle ſubjoins a reaſon "conſidering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted;" i. e. conſidering thy own frailty, leſt thou alſo fall by the like temptation.

We are all frail unſtable creatures; and it is merely owing to the free grace and good providence of GOD that we run not into the ſame exceſs of riot with other men. Every offending brother, therefore, claims our pity rather than our reſentment; and each member ſhould ſtrive to be the moſt forward, as well as moſt gentle, in reſtoring him to his former ſtate.

But ſuppoſing a perſon not to be overtaken, but to fall wilfully into a crime; yet who art thou that denieſt forgiveneſs to thy offending brother? "Let him that ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall." Take ye, brethren, the holy apoſtles as eminent examples for you to learn by, how you ought to behave in this matter. Conſider how quickly they joined the right hand of fellowſhip with *Peter*, who had ſo wilfully denied his maſter: for we find *John* and him together but two days after, *John* xx. 2. And ver. 19, we find him aſſembled with the reſt. So ſoon did they forgive, ſo ſoon aſſo-

ciate

ciate with their ſinful, yet relenting brother. "Let us go and do likewiſe."

But there is another kind of reproof incumbent on every member of a religious ſociety; namely, a *gentle rebuke* for ſome miſcarriage or other, which though not actually ſinful, yet may become the occaſion of ſin. This indeed ſeems a more eaſy, but perhaps will be found a more difficult point than the former: for when a perſon has really ſinned, he cannot but own his brethrens reproof to be juſt; whereas, when it was only for ſome little miſconduct, the pride that is in our natures will ſcarce ſuffer us to brook it. But however ungrateful this pill may be to our brother, yet if we have any concern for his welfare, it muſt be adminiſtered by ſome friendly hand or other. By all means then let it be applied; only, like a ſkilful phyſician, gild over the ungrateful pill, and endeavour, if poſſible, to deceive thy brother into health and ſoundneſs. "Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and malice, and evil-ſpeaking, be put away" from it. Let the patient know, his recovery is the only thing aimed at, and that thou delighteſt not cauſeleſly to grieve thy brother; then thou canſt not want ſucceſs.

2. *Mutual exhortation* is the ſecond duty reſulting from the words of the text. "Again, if two lye together, then they have heat."

Obſerve, the wiſe man ſuppoſes it as impoſſible for religious perſons to meet together, and not to be the warmer for each other's company, as for two perſons to lye in the ſame bed, and yet freeze with cold. But now, how is it poſſible to communicate heat to each other, without mutually ſtirring up the gift of GOD which is in us, by brotherly exhortation? Let every member then of a religious ſociety write that zealous apoſtle's advice on the tables of his heart; "See that ye exhort, and provoke one another to love, and to good works; and ſo much the more, as you ſee the day of the LORD approaching." Believe me, brethren, we have need of exhortation to rouſe up our ſleepy ſouls, to ſet us upon our watch againſt the temptations of the world, the fleſh, and the devil; to excite us to renounce ourſelves, to take up our croſſes, and follow our bleſſed maſter, and the glorious company of ſaints and martyrs, "who through faith have fought

the good fight, and are gone before us to inherit the promiſes." A third part, therefore, of the time wherein a religious ſociety meets, ſeems neceſſary to be ſpent in this important duty: for what avails it to have our underſtandings enlightened by pious reading, unleſs our wills are at the ſame time inclined, and inflamed by mutual exhortation, to put it in practice? Add alſo, that this is the beſt way both to receive and impart light, and the only means to preſerve and increaſe that warmth and heat which each perſon firſt brought with him; GOD ſo ordering this, as all other ſpiritual gifts, that "to him that hath, i. e. improves and communicates what he hath, ſhall be given; but from him that hath not, or does not improve the heat he hath, ſhall be taken away even that which he ſeemed to have." So needful, ſo eſſentially neceſſary, is exhortation to the good of ſociety.

3. Thirdly, The text points out another duty incumbent on every member of a religious ſociety, to defend each other from thoſe that do oppoſe them. "And if one prevail againſt him, yet two ſhall withſtand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

Here the wiſe man takes it for granted, that offences will come, nay, and that they may prevail too. And this is no more than our bleſſed maſter has long ſince told us. Not, indeed, that there is any thing in chriſtianity itſelf that has the leaſt tendency to give riſe to, or promote ſuch offences: No, on the contrary, it breathes nothing but unity and love.

But ſo it is, that ever ſince the fatal ſentence pronounced by GOD, after our firſt parents fall, "I will put enmity between thy ſeed and her ſeed;" he that is born after the fleſh, the unregenerate unconverted ſinner, has in all ages "perſecuted him that is born after the ſpirit:" and ſo it always will be. Accordingly we find an early proof given of this in the inſtance of *Cain* and *Abel*; of *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*; and of *Jacob* and *Eſau*. And, indeed, the whole Bible contains little elſe but an hiſtory of the great and continued oppoſition between the children of this world, and the children of GOD. The firſt chriſtians were remarkable examples of this; and though thoſe troubleſome times, bleſſed be GOD, are now over, yet the apoſtle has laid it down as a general rule, and all who are ſincere experimentally prove the truth of it; that

"they that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, muſt (to the end of the world, in ſome degree or other) ſuffer perſecution." That therefore this may not make us deſert our bleſſed maſter's cauſe, every member ſhould unite their forces, in order to ſtand againſt it. And for the better effecting this, each would do well, from time to time, to communicate his experiences, grievances, and temptations, and beg his companions (firſt aſking GOD's aſſiſtance, without which all is nothing) to adminiſter reproof, exhortation, or comfort, as his caſe requires: ſo that "if one cannot prevail againſt it, yet two ſhall withſtand it; and a threefold (much leſs a many-fold) cord will not be quickly broken."

IV. But it is time for me to proceed to the fourth general thing propoſed, to draw an inference or two from what has been ſaid.

1. And firſt, if "two are better than one," and the advantages of religious ſociety are ſo many and ſo great; then it is the duty of every true chriſtian to ſet on foot, eſtabliſh and promote, as much as in him lyes, ſocieties of this nature. And I believe we may venture to affirm, that if ever a ſpirit of true chriſtianity is revived in the world, it muſt be brought about by ſome ſuch means as this. Motives, ſurely, cannot be wanting, to ſtir us up to this commendable and neceſſary undertaking: for, granting all hitherto advanced to be of no force, yet methinks the ſingle conſideration, that great part of our happineſs in heaven will conſiſt in the *Communion of Saints*; or that the intereſt as well as piety of thoſe who differ from us, is ſtrengthened and ſupported by nothing more than their frequent meetings; either of theſe conſiderations, I ſay, one would think, ſhould induce us to do our utmoſt to copy after their good example, and ſettle a laſting and pious communion of the ſaints on earth. Add to this, that we find the kingdom of darkneſs eſtabliſhed daily by ſuch like means; and ſhall not the kingdom of CHRIST be ſet in oppoſition againſt it? Shall the children of *Belial* aſſemble and ſtrengthen each other in wickedneſs; and ſhall not the children of GOD unite, and ſtrengthen themſelves in piety? Shall ſocieties on ſocieties be countenanced for midnight re-

vellings, and the promoting of vice, and ſcarcely one be found intended for the propagation of virtue? Be aſtoniſhed, O heavens at this!

2. But this leads me to a ſecond inference; namely, to warn perſons of the great danger thoſe are in, who either by their ſubſcriptions, preſence, or approbation, promote ſocieties of a quite oppoſite nature to religion.

And here I would not be underſtood, to mean only thoſe public meetings which are deſigned manifeſtly for nothing elſe but revellings and banquetings, for chambering and wantonneſs, and at which a modeſt heathen would bluſh to be preſent; but alſo thoſe ſeemingly innocent entertainments and meetings, which the politer part of the world are ſo very fond of, and ſpend ſo much time in: but which, notwithſtanding, keep as many perſons from a ſenſe of true religion, as doth intemperance, debauchery, or any other crime whatever. Indeed, whilſt we are in this world, we muſt have proper relaxations, to fit us both for the buſineſs of our profeſſion, and religion. But then, for perſons who call themſelves chriſtians, that have ſolemnly vowed at their baptiſm, to renounce the vanities of this ſinful world; that are commanded in ſcripture "to abſtain from all appearance of evil, and to have their converſation in heaven:" for ſuch perſons as theſe to ſupport meetings, which (to ſay no worſe of them) are vain and trifling, and have a natural tendency to draw off our minds from GOD, is abſurd, ridiculous, and ſinful. Surely two are not better than one in this caſe: No; it is to be wiſhed there was not one to be found concerned in it. The ſooner we forſake the aſſembling ourſelves together in ſuch a manner, the better; and no matter how quickly the cord that holds ſuch ſocieties (was it a thouſand-fold) is broken.

But you, brethren, have not ſo learned CHRIST: but, on the contrary, like true diſciples of your Lord and Maſter, have by the bleſſing of GOD (as this evening's ſolemnity abundantly teſtifies) happily formed yourſelves into ſuch ſocieties, which, if duly attended on, and improved, cannot but ſtrengthen you in your chriſtian warfare, and "make you fruitful in every good word and work."

What remains for me, but, as was propoſed, in the laſt place, to cloſe what has been ſaid, in a word or two, by way of

of exhortation, and to beſeech you, in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, to go on in the way you have begun; and by a conſtant conſcientious attendance on your reſpective ſocieties, to diſcountenance vice, encourage virtue, and build each other up in the knowledge and fear of GOD.

Only permit me to "ſtir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance," and to exhort you, "if there be any conſolation in CHRIST, any fellowſhip of the ſpirit," again and again to conſider, that as all chriſtians in general, ſo all members of religious ſocieties in particular, are in an eſpecial manner, as houſes built upon an hill; and that therefore it highly concerns you to walk circumſpectly towards thoſe that are without, and to take heed to yourſelves, that your converſation, in common life, be as becometh ſuch an open and peculiar profeſſion of the goſpel of CHRIST: knowing that the eyes of all men are upon you, narrowly to inſpect every circumſtance of your behaviour: and that every notorious wilful miſcarriage of any ſingle member will, in ſome meaſure, redound to the ſcandal and diſhonour of your whole fraternity.

Labour, therefore, my beloved brethren, to let your practice correſpond to your profeſſion: and think not that it will be ſufficient for you to plead at the laſt day, LORD have we not aſſembled ourſelves together in thy name, and enlivened each other, by ſinging pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs? For verily, I ſay unto you, notwithſtanding this, our bleſſed LORD will bid you depart from him; nay, you ſhall receive a greater damnation, if, in the midſt of theſe great pretenſions, you are found to be workers of iniquity.

But GOD forbid that any ſuch evil ſhould befal you; that there ſhould be ever a *Judas*, a traitor, amongſt ſuch diſtinguiſhed followers of our common maſter. No, on the contrary, the excellency of your rules, the regularity of your meetings, and more eſpecially your pious zeal in aſſembling in ſuch a public and ſolemn manner ſo frequently in the year, perſuade me to think, that you are willing, not barely to ſeem, but to be in reality, chriſtians; and hope to be found at the laſt day, what you would be eſteemed now, holy, ſincere diſciples of a crucified Redeemer.

Oh,

Oh, may you always continue thus minded! and make it your daily, conſtant endeavour, both by precept and example, to turn all your converſe with, more eſpecially thoſe of your own ſocieties, into the ſame moſt bleſſed ſpirit and temper. Thus will you adorn the goſpel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST in all things: Thus will you anticipate the happineſs of a future ſtate; and by attending on, and improving the communion of ſaints on earth, be made meet to join the communion and fellowſhip of the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, of the holy angels, nay, of the ever-bleſſed and eternal GOD in heaven.

Which GOD of his infinite mercy grant through JESUS CHRIST our LORD; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, three perſons and one GOD, be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all honour and praiſe, might, majeſty and dominion, now and for ever. *Amen.*

SER-

SERMON IX.

The Folly and Danger of being not righteous enough.

ECCLES. vii. 16.

Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyſelf over-wiſe: why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?

NOTHING is more frequent, than while people are living in a courſe of ſin, and after the faſhion and manner of the world, there is no notice taken of them; neither are their ways diſpleaſing to their companions and carnal relations: but if they ſet their faces Zion-ward, and begin to feel the power of GOD on their hearts; then they are ſurrounded with temptations from their friends, who thus act the devil's part. The enemies, the greateſt enemies a young convert meets with, my dear brethren, are thoſe of his own houſe. They that will be godly, muſt ſuffer perſecution; ſo it was in CHRIST's time, and ſo it was in the Apoſtles time too; for our LORD came not to ſend peace, but a ſword. Our relations would not have us ſit in the ſcorner's chair; they would not have us be prodigals, conſuming our ſubſtance upon harlots; neither would they have us rakes or libertines, but they would have us be contented with an almoſt chriſtianity. To keep up our reputation by going to church, and adhering to the outward forms of religion, ſaying our prayers, reading the word of GOD, and taking the ſacraments; this, they imagine, is all that is neceſſary for to be chriſtians indeed; and when we go one ſtep farther than this, their mouths are open againſt us, as *Peter*'s was to CHRIST: "Spare thyſelf, do thyſelf no harm."

And of this nature are the words of the text. They are not the words of *Solomon* himſelf, but the words of an infidel ſpeaking to him, whom he introduces in ſeveral parts of this book; for *Solomon* had been ſhewing the misfortunes which attended the truly good, as in the verſe before our text.

Upon this the infidel ſays, "Be not righteous over-much, neither be thou over-wiſe: why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?" *i. e.* Why ſhouldſt thou bring theſe misfortunes upon thyſelf, by being over-ſtrict? Be not righteous over-much; eat, drink, and be merry, live as the world lives, and then you will avoid thoſe misfortunes which may attend you, by being righteous over-much.

This text has another meaning; but take it which way you will, my brethren, it was ſpoken by an unbeliever; therefore it was no credit for the perſon who lately preached upon this text, to take it for granted, that theſe were the words of *Solomon*: the words of an infidel was not a proper text to a chriſtian congregation. But as *David* came out againſt *Goliah*, not armed as the champion was, with ſword and ſpear, but with a ſling and ſtone, and then cut off his head with his own ſword; ſo I come out againſt theſe letter-learned men, in the ſtrength of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and, my dear brethren, I truſt he will direct me to uſe my ſling, ſo that our enemies may not gainſay us; and by the ſword of GOD's word, cut off the heads of our Redeemer's enemies.

But though they are not the words of *Solomon*, yet we will take them in the ſame manner the late writer did; and, from the words, ſhall,

Firſt, Shew you what it is, not to be righteous over-much, that we may not deſtroy ourſelves.

Secondly, I ſhall let you ſee what it is to be righteous over-much. And then,

Thirdly, Conclude with an exhortation to all of you, high and low, rich and poor, one with another, to come to the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Firſt, The firſt thing propoſed, is to ſhew you what it is not to be righteous over-much. And here,

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It is by no means to be righteous over-much, to affirm we muſt have the ſame Spirit of GOD as the firſt Apoſtles had, and muſt feel that Spirit upon our hearts.

By receiving the Spirit of GOD, is not to be underſtood, that we are to be inſpired to ſhew outward ſigns and wonders, to raiſe dead bodies, to cure leprous perſons, or to give ſight to the blind: theſe miracles were only of uſe in the firſt ages of the church; and therefore chriſtians (nominal chriſtians, for we have little elſe but the name) may have all the gifts of the Spirit, and yet none of the graces of it: Thou, O man, mayeſt be enabled by faith to remove mountains; thou, by the power of GOD, mayeſt caſt out devils; thou, by that power, mayeſt ſpeak with the tongues of men and angels; yea, thou mayeſt, by that power, hold up thy finger and ſtop the ſun in the firmament; and if all theſe are unſanctified by the Spirit of GOD, they would be of no ſervice to thee, but would hurry thee to hell with the greater ſolemnity. *Saul* received the ſpirit of propheſying, and had another heart, yet *Saul* was probably a caſt-away. We muſt receive the Spirit of GOD in its ſanctifying graces upon our ſouls; for CHRIST ſays, "Unleſs a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of GOD." We are all by nature born in ſin, and at as great a diſtance from GOD, as the devils themſelves. I have told you often, and now tell you again, that you are by nature a motley mixture of the beaſt and devil, and we cannot recover ourſelves from the ſtate wherein we have fallen, therefore muſt be renewed by the Holy Ghoſt. By the Holy Ghoſt, I mean, the third Perſon of the ever-bleſſed Trinity, co-equal, co-eſſential, co-eternal, and conſubſtantial with the Father and the Son; and therefore, when we are baptized, it is into the nature of the Father, into the nature of the Son, and into the nature of the Holy Ghoſt: and we are not true chriſtians, till we are ſanctified by the Spirit of GOD.

Though our modern preachers do not actually deny the Spirit of GOD, yet they ſay, "Chriſtians muſt not feel him;" which is in effect to deny him. When *Nicodemus* came to CHRIST, and the LORD JESUS was inſtructing him, concerning the new birth, ſays he to our LORD, "How can theſe things be?" *Nicodemus*, though a maſter of *Iſrael*, acts juſt as our learned Rabbi's do now. The anſwer that CHRIST

gave

gave him ſhould ſtop the mouths of our letter-learned phariſees: "The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and we hear the ſound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth." Now till the Spirit of GOD is felt on our ſouls as the wind on our bodies, indeed, my dear brethren, you have no intereſt in him: religion conſiſts not in external performance, it muſt be in the heart, or elſe it is only a name, which cannot profit us, a name to live whilſt we are dead.

A late preacher upon this text, ſeems to laugh at us, for talking of the Spirit in a ſenſible manner, and talks to us as the *Jews* did to CHRIST: They ſaid, "How can this man give us his fleſh to eat?" So he aſks, "What ſign or proof do we give of it?" We do not imagine, that GOD muſt appear to us, and give it us: no; but there may be, and is, a frequent receiving, when no ſeeing of it; and it is as plainly felt in the ſoul, as any impreſſion is, or can be, upon the body. To what a damnable condition ſhould we bring poor ſinners, if they could not be ſenſible of the Spirit of GOD; namely, a reprobate mind and paſt feeling?

"What proof do they give?" ſays the writer. What ſign would they have? Do they expect us to raiſe the dead, to give ſight to the blind, to cure lepers, to make the lame to walk, and the deaf to hear? If theſe are what they expect, I ſpeak with humility, GOD, by us, hath done greater things than theſe: many, who were dead in ſin, are raiſed to ſcripture-life: thoſe, who were leprous by nature, are cleanſed by the Spirit of GOD; thoſe, who were lame in duty, now run in GOD's commands; thoſe, who were deaf, their ears are unſtopped to hear his diſcipline, and hearken to his advice; and the poor have the goſpel preached to them. No wonder people talk at this rate, when they can tell us, "That the Spirit of GOD, is a good conſcience, conſequent thereupon." My dear brethren, *Seneca*, *Cicero*, *Plato*, or any of the heathen philoſophers, would have given as good a definition as this: It means no more, than reflecting that we have done well. This, this is only Deiſm refined: Deiſts laugh at us, when we pretend to be againſt their notions, and yet theſe men uſe no other reaſon for our differing from them, than what is agreeable to Deiſts principles.

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This writer tells us, " It is againſt common-ſenſe to talk of the feeling of the Spirit of GOD." Common-ſenſe, my brethren, was never allowed to be a judge; yea, it is above its comprehenſion, neither are, nor can the ways of GOD be known by common-ſenſe. We ſhould never have known the things of GOD at all by our common ſenſes: no; it is the revelation of GOD which is to be our judge; it is that we appeal to, and not to our weak and ſhallow conceptions of things. Thus we may ſee, it is by no means to be righteous over-much, to affirm we muſt have the Spirit of GOD as the Apoſtles had. Nor,

Secondly, Is it to be righteous over-much to frequent religious aſſemblies.

The preacher, upon this text, aims at putting aſide all the religious ſocieties that are in the kingdom: Indeed, he ſays, " You may go to church as often as opportunity ſerves, and " on *Sundays*; ſay your prayers, read the word of GOD; and, " in his opinion, every thing elſe had better be let alone: " and as for the Spirit of GOD upon your ſouls, you are to " look upon it as uſeleſs and unneceſſary." If this, my brethren, is the doctrine we have now preached, chriſtianity is at a low ebb indeed: but GOD forbid you ſhould thus learn JESUS CHRIST. Do you not forbear the frequenting of religious aſſemblies; for as nothing helps to build up the devil's kingdom more than the ſocieties of wicked men, nothing would be more for pulling of it down, than the people of GOD meeting to ſtrengthen each others hands; and as the devil has ſo many friends, will none of you be friends to the bleſſed JESUS? Yes, I hope many of you will be of the LORD's ſide, and build each other up in chriſtian love and fellowſhip. This is what the primitive chriſtians delighted in; and ſhall not we follow ſo excellent an example? My brethren, till chriſtian converſation is more agreeable to us, we cannot expect to ſee the goſpel of CHRIST run and be glorified. Thus it is by no means to be righteous over-much, to frequent religious aſſemblies. Nor,

Thirdly, Is it to be righteous over-much, to abſtain from the diverſions and entertainments of the age.

We are commanded to " abſtain from the appearance of evil," and that " whatſoever we do, whether we eat or drink,

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we ſhall do all to the glory of GOD." The writer upon this text tells us, "That it will be accounted unlawful to ſmell to a roſe:" no, my dear brethren, you may ſmell to a pink and roſe too if you pleaſe, but take care to avoid the appearance of ſin. They talk of innocent diverſions and recreations; for my part, I know of no diverſion, but that of *doing good*: if you can find any diverſion which is not contrary to your baptiſmal vow, of renouncing the pomps and vanities of this wicked world; if you can find any diverſion which tends to the glory of GOD; if you can find any diverſion, which you would be willing to be found at by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, I give you free licence to go to them and welcome; but if, on the contrary, they are found to keep ſinners from coming to the LORD JESUS CHRIST; if they are a means to harden the heart, and ſuch as you would not willingly be found in when you come to die, then, my dear brethren, keep from them: for, indeed, the diverſions of this age are contrary to chriſtianity. Many of you may think I have gone too far, but I ſhall go a great deal farther yet: I will attack the devil in his ſtrongeſt holds, and bear my teſtimony againſt our faſhionable and polite entertainments. What ſatisfaction can it be, what pleaſure is there in ſpending ſeveral hours at *cards*? Strange! that even people who are grown old, can ſpend whole nights in this diverſion: perhaps many of you will cry out, "What harm is there in it?" My dear brethren, whatſoever is not of faith, or for the glory of GOD, is a ſin: Now does cards tend to promote this? Is it not miſpending your precious time, which ſhould be employed in working out your ſalvation with fear and trembling? Do *play-houſes*, *horſe-racing*, *balls* and *aſſemblies*, tend to promote the glory of GOD? Would you be willing to have your ſoul demanded of you, while you are at one of thoſe places? Many of theſe are, (I muſt ſpeak, I cannot forbear to ſpeak againſt theſe entertainments; come what will, I will declare againſt them) many, I ſay, of theſe are kept up by public authority: the play-houſes are ſupported by a public fund, and our newspapers are full of horſe-races all through the kingdom: theſe things are ſinful; indeed they are exceeding ſinful. What good can come from a horſe-race; from abuſing GOD Almighty's creatures, and putting them to that uſe he never

deſigned

ſigned for them: the play-houſes, are they not nurſeries of chauchery in the age? and the ſupporters and patrons of hem, are encouragers and promoters of all the evil that is one by them; they are the bane of the age, and will be the ſtruction of thoſe who frequent them. Is it not high time r the true miniſters of JESUS CHRIST, who have been par-kers of the heavenly gift, to lift up their voices as a trumpet, d cry aloud againſt theſe diverſions of the age? Are they t earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh? If you have taſted of the love GOD, and have felt his power upon your ſouls, you would more go to a play, than you would run your head into a rnace.

And what occaſions theſe places to be ſo much frequented, the clergy's making no ſcruple to be at theſe polite places? ey frequent play-houſes, they go to horſe-races, they go to alls and aſſemblies, they frequent taverns, and follow all the ntertainments that the age affords; and yet theſe are the per-ons who ſhould adviſe their hearers to refrain from them; but nſtead thereof, they encourage them by their example. Per-ons are too apt to rely upon, and believe their paſtors, rather han the ſcriptures; they think that there is no crime in going o plays or horſe-races, to balls and aſſemblies; for if there were, they think thoſe perſons, who are their miniſters, would not frequent them: but, my dear brethren, obſerve hey always go diſguiſed, the miniſters are afraid of being ſeen n their gowns and caſſocks; the reaſon thereof is plain, their onſciences inform them, that it is not an example fit for the niniſters of the goſpel to ſet; thus, they are the means of iving that offence to the people of GOD, which I would not or ten thouſand worlds: they lay a ſtumbling-block in the ay of their weak brethren, which they will not remove, hough it is a ſtumbling-block of offence. "Woe unto the vorld becauſe of offences, but woe unto that man by whom he offence cometh." The polite gentlemen of the age, ſpend heir time in following theſe diverſions, becauſe the love of GOD is not in their hearts; they are void of CHRIST, and eſtitute of the Spirit of GOD; and not being acquainted vith the delight there is in GOD and his ways, being ſtrangers o theſe things, they run to the devil for diverſions, and are leaſed and delighted with the ſilly ones he ſhews them.

My dear brethren, I ſpeak of theſe things, theſe innocent diverſions, as the polite part of the world calls them, by experience; perhaps none, for my age, hath read or ſeen more plays than I have: I took delight in, and was pleaſed with them. It is true, I went to church frequently, received the ſacrament, and was diligent in the uſe of the forms of religion, but I was all this while ignorant of the power of GOD on my heart, and unacquainted with the work of grace; but when GOD was pleaſed to ſhine with power upon my ſoul, I could no longer be contented to feed on huſks, or what the ſwine did eat: the Bible then was my food; there, and there only I took delight: and till you feel this ſame power, you will not abſtain from the earthly delights of this age, you will take no comfort in GOD's ways, nor receive any comfort from him; for you are void of the love of GOD, having only the form of godlineſs, while you are denying the power of it; you are nominal chriſtians, when you have not the power of chriſtianity.

The polite gentlemen ſay, "Are we to be always upon "our knees? Would you have us be always at prayer, and "reading or hearing the word of GOD?"

My dear brethren, the faſhionable ones, who take delight in hunting, are not tired of being continually on horſeback after their hounds; and when once you are renewed by the Spirit of GOD, it will be a continual pleaſure to be walking with, and talking of GOD, and telling what great things JESUS CHRIST hath done for your ſouls; and till you can find as much pleaſure in converſing with GOD, as theſe men do of their hounds, you have no ſhare in him; but when you have taſted how good the LORD is, you will ſhew forth his praiſe; out of the abundance of your heart your mouth will ſpeak.

This brings me to the ſecond thing propoſed, which is an extream that very ſeldom happens:

Secondly, To ſhew what it is to be righteous over-much. And here,

Firſt, When we confine the Spirit of GOD to this or that particular church; and are not willing to converſe with any but thoſe of the ſame communion; this is to be righteous

ver-much with a witneſs: and ſo it is, to confine our communion within church-walls, and to think that JESUS could not preach in a field as well as on conſecrated-ground; this is *judaiſm*, this is *bigotry:* this is like *Peter*, who would not go to preach the goſpel to the *Gentiles*, till he had a viſion from GOD: and when his conduct was blamed by the diſciples, he could not ſatisfy them till he had acquainted them with the viſion he had ſeen. And, therefore, we may juſtly infer, the Spirit of GOD is the center of unity; and wherever I ſee the image of my Maſter, I never enquire of them their opinions; I aſk them not what they are, ſo they love JESUS CHRIST in ſincerity and truth, but embrace them as my brother, my ſiſter, and my ſpouſe: and this is the ſpirit of chriſtianity. Many perſons, who are bigots to this or that opinion, when one of a different way of thinking hath come where they were, have left the room or place on the account: this is the ſpirit of the devil; and if it was poſſible that theſe perſons could be admitted into heaven with ſuch tempers, that very place would be hell to them. Chriſtianity will never flouriſh, till we are all of one heart and of one mind; and this would be the only means of ſeeing the goſpel of JESUS to flouriſh, more than ever it will by perſecuting thoſe who differ from us.

This may be eſteemed as enthuſiaſm and madneſs, and as a deſign to undermine the eſtabliſhed church: No; GOD is my judge, I ſhould rejoice to ſee all the world adhere to her articles; I ſhould rejoice to ſee the miniſters of the Church of *England*, preach up thoſe very articles they have ſubſcribed to; but thoſe miniſters who do preach up the articles, are eſteemed as madmen, enthuſiaſts, ſchiſmatics, and underminers of the eſtabliſhed church: and though they ſay theſe things of me, bleſſed be GOD, they are without foundation. My dear brethren, I am a friend to her articles, I am a friend to her homilies, I am a friend to her liturgy; and, if they did not thruſt me out of their churches, I would read them every day; but I do not confine the Spirit of GOD there; for I ſay it again, I love all that love the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and eſteem him my brother, my friend, my ſpouſe; aye, my very ſoul is knit to that perſon. The ſpirit of perſecution will never, indeed it will never make any to love JESUS CHRIST. The phariſees make this to be madneſs, ſo much as to mention perſecu-

tion in a chriſtian country; but there is as much the ſpirit of perſecution now in the world, as ever there was; their will is as great, but bleſſed be GOD, they want the power; otherwiſe, how ſoon would they ſend me to priſon, make my feet faſt in the ſtocks, yea, would think they did GOD ſervice in killing me, and would rejoice to take away my life.

This is not the Spirit of CHRIST, my dear brethren; I had not come to have thus preached; I had not come into the highways and hedges; I had not expoſed myſelf to the ill treatment of theſe letter-learned men, but for the ſake of your ſouls: indeed, I had no other reaſon, but your ſalvation; and for that (I ſpeak the truth in CHRIST, I lie not) I would be content to go to priſon; yea, I would rejoice to die for you, ſo I could but be a means to bring ſome of you to JESUS: I could not bear to ſee ſo many in the highway to deſtruction, and not ſhew them their danger: I could not bear, my brethren, to ſee you more willing to learn, than the teachers are to inſtruct you: and if any of them were to come and preach to you, I ſhould not envy them, I ſhould not call them enthuſiaſts or madmen; I ſhould rejoice to hear they had ten thouſand times more ſucceſs than I have met with; I would give them the right-hand of fellowſhip; I would adviſe them to go on; I would wiſh them good luck in the name of the LORD, and ſay as CHRIST did, when the diſciples informed him of ſome caſting out devils in his name, and were for rebuking of them, "Forbid them not, for they that are not againſt us are for us;" or as St. *Paul* ſays, "Some preach CHRIST of envy, and ſome of good-will; notwithſtanding, ſo CHRIST is but preached, I rejoice; yea, and will rejoice." The goſpel of JESUS, is a goſpel of peace. Thus you may ſee, that to be righteous over-much, is to be uncharitable, cenſorious, and to perſecute perſons for differing from us in religion.

Secondly, Perſons are righteous over-much, when they ſpend ſo much time in religious aſſemblies, as to neglect their families. There is no licence given by the bleſſed JESUS, for idleneſs; for in the very infancy of the world, idleneſs was not allowed of. In paradiſe, *Adam* and *Eve* dreſſed the garden, *Cain* was a tiller of the ground, and *Abel* was a keeper of ſheep; and there is a proverb amongſt the *Jews*, "That he

who brings his ſon up without a buſineſs, brings him up to be a thief:" and therefore our Saviour was a carpenter; "Is not this the carpenter's ſon," ſaid the *Jews:* and St. *Paul*, though brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, was a tent-maker. Labour, my brethren, is impoſed on all mankind as part of the divine curſe; and you are called to be uſeful in the ſociety to which you belong: take care firſt for the kingdom of GOD, and all things neceſſary ſhall be added. To labour for the meat that periſheth, is your duty; only take care, that you do not neglect getting the meat for the ſoul: that is of the greateſt conſequence, for this plain reaſon, the things of this life are temporal, but thoſe of the next are eternal. I would have rich men to work as well as poor: it is owing to their idleneſs, that the devil hurries them to his diverſions; they can be in their beds all the morning, and ſpend the afternoon and evening in dreſſing, viſiting, and at balls, plays, or aſſemblies, when they ſhould be working out their ſalvation with fear and trembling. Such a life as this, occaſions a ſpiritual numbneſs in the ſoul; and if JESUS CHRIST was not to ſtop thoſe who thus ſpend their time, they would be hurried into eternity, without once thinking of their immortal ſouls. But JESUS CHRIST has compaſſion upon many of them, and while they are in their blood, he bids them "live." And though I preach this doctrine to you, yet I do not bid you be idle; no, they that do not work ſhould not eat. You have two callings, a general one, and a ſpecial one: as we are to regard the one in reſpect of our bodies, ſo we are to regard the other on account of our ſouls. Take heed, my brethren, I beſeech you, take heed, leſt you labour ſo for the meat that periſheth, as to forget that meat which endureth for ever. Seek the things of GOD firſt; look well to obtain oil in your lamps, grace in your hearts. I am not perſuading you to take no care about the things of the world, but only not to be encumbered with them, ſo as to neglect your duty towards GOD, and a proper concern for your ſouls. It is meet, it is right, it is your bounden duty, to mind the callings wherein GOD hath placed you; and you may be ſaid to be righteous overmuch not to regard them. This brings me,

Thirdly, To give you another ſign of being righteous ov much; and that is, when we faſt and uſe corporal auſteri ſo as to unfit us for the ſervice of GOD.

This, my brethren, you may think there is no occaſion all to caution you againſt, and indeed there is not a great ceſſity for it; however, many perſons, upon their firſt bei awakened to a ſenſe of their ſin, are tempted to uſe auſteri to that exceſs which is ſinful. It is our duty to faſt, it is duty to faſt often, and it is what we are directed by JESUS CHRIST himſelf; but then we are to take care to d in a proper manner: to bring our bodies under; for the ſer of GOD, is that which we are commanded by our Lo JESUS CHRIST.

The late preacher upon this text, runs into great extrem and charges us with ſaying and acting things, of which we n thought; but I do not regard what he ſaid of me: I do mind his bitter invectives againſt my miniſtry; I do not m his deſpiſing my youth, and calling me novice and enthuſi I forgive him from my very heart: but when he reflects on Maſter; when he ſpeaks againſt my Redeemer; when JE CHRIST is ſpoken againſt, I muſt ſpeak, (I muſt ſp indeed, or I ſhould burſt:) when he gives liberty to per to take a chearful glaſs, and alledges CHRIST for an exam as in the marriage-feaſt, ſaying, "CHRIST turned water i "wine, when it is plain there had been more drank than "neceſſary before;" what is this, but to charge CHR with encouraging drunkenneſs? It is true, the Governor ſ "Every man in the beginning ſets forth good wine, when men have well drank, that which is worſe; but t haſt kept the good wine until now:" but it does not al follow, that it was not neceſſary, or that there had be ſufficient quantity before: I would not ſpeak thus ſlightin of one of my Maſter's miracles, for the whole world. we may obſerve, that as CHRIST chiefly viſited poor pe they might not have wherewithal to buy a ſufficient quan of wine; or having more gueſts than were expected, wine was expended ſooner than they thought; then the ther of JESUS tells him, "They have no wine;" he anſw "Woman, what have I to do with thee? My hour is yet come." After this he commanded them to fill the w

pots with water, and they filled them to the brim, and this water he turned into wine: now it does not at all follow, that there was more drank than was neceſſary; neither would the LORD JESUS CHRIST have continued in the houſe if there had. But we have an excellent leſſon to learn from this miracle: by the water-pots being empty, we may underſtand, the heart of man being by nature deſtitute of his grace, his ſpeaking and commanding to fill them, ſhews, that when CHRIST ſpeaks, the heart that was empty of grace before, ſhall be filled; and the water-pots being filled to the brim, ſhews, that CHRIST will fill believers hearts brim full of the Holy Ghoſt: and from the Governor's obſerving, that the laſt wine was the beſt, learn, that a believer's beſt comforts, ſhall be the laſt and greateſt, for they ſhall come with the greateſt power upon the ſoul, and continue longeſt there: this, this my dear brethren, is the leſſon we may learn from this miracle.

But one great inconſiſtency I cannot avoid taking notice of in this late learned preacher. In the beginning of his ſermon, he charges us with "laying heavy burthens upon people, "which they are not able to bear;" in the latter part he charges us with being Antinomians, whoſe tenets are, "So "you ſay you believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, you may "live the life of devils." Now, he charges us with being *too ſtrict*, and by and by with being *too looſe*. Which ſide, my brethren, will you take? Thus you ſee, when perſons forſake CHRIST, they make ſtrange miſtakes; for there can be no greater oppoſition of ſentiments than this letter-learned writer has made: as oppoſite as light and darkneſs, good and evil, ſweet and bitter. And, on this account, to find out theſe lettered-learned gentlemens notions of the new-birth, I put a paragraph in my Journal; and, bleſſed be GOD, I have obtained my deſires, and have plainly perceived, that the perſons who have lately written concerning the new-birth, know no more of it than a blind man does of colours, nor can they have any more notion of it, (by all their learning, falſely ſo called) than the blind man, who was to give an account what the ſun was, and, after a conſiderable time allowed for ſtudy, he ſaid, "It was like the ſound of a trumpet." And till they are taught of GOD, they will be unacquainted with the new-

birth: therefore, if you have a mind to know what the devil has to ſay againſt us, read Dr. *Trapp*'s ſermons.

It is with grief I ſpeak theſe things, and were not the welfare of your ſouls, and my Redeemer's honour at ſtake, I would not now open my mouth, yea I would willingly die (GOD is my judge) for the perſon who wrote ſuch bitter things againſt me, ſo it would be a means of ſaving his ſoul. If he had only ſpoken againſt me, I would not have anſwered him; but, on his making my Redeemer a pattern of vice, if I was not to ſpeak, the very ſtones would cry out; therefore, the honour of my Redeemer, and love to you, conſtrains me to ſpeak. It is of neceſſity that I ſpeak, when the divinity of JESUS CHRIST is ſpoken againſt, it is the duty of miniſters to cry aloud, and ſpare not. I cannot forbear, come what will; for I know not what kind of divinity we have now among us: we muſt have a righteouſneſs of our own, and do our beſt endeavours, and then CHRIST will make up the deficiency; that is, you muſt be your own Saviour, in part. This is not the doctrine of the goſpel; this is not the doctrine of JESUS: no; CHRIST is all in all; JESUS CHRIST muſt be your whole wiſdom; JESUS CHRIST muſt be your whole righteouſneſs, JESUS CHRIST muſt be your whole ſanctification; or JESUS CHRIST will never be your eternal redemption and ſanctification. Inward holineſs is looked on, by ſome, as the effect of enthuſiaſm and madneſs; and preachers of the neceſſity of the new-birth, are eſteemed as perſons fit for *Bedlam*. Our polite and faſhionable doctrine, is, "That there is a fitneſs in man, "and that GOD, ſeeing you a good creature, beſtows upon "you his grace." GOD forbid, my dear brethren, you ſhould thus learn JESUS CHRIST!

This is not the doctrine I preach to you: I ſay, ſalvation is the free gift of GOD. It is GOD's free grace, I preach unto you, not of works, leſt any one ſhould boaſt. JESUS CHRIST juſtifies the ungodly; JESUS CHRIST paſſed by, and ſaw you polluted with your blood, and bid you live. It is not of works, it is of faith: we are not juſtified for our faith, for faith is the inſtrument, but by your faith, the active as well as the paſſive obedience of CHRIST, muſt be applied to you. JESUS CHRIST hath fulfilled the law, he hath made it honourable; JESUS CHRIST hath made ſatisfaction to his Father's

Father's juſtice, full ſatisfaction; and it is as compleat as it is full, and GOD will not demand it again. JESUS CHRIST is the way; JESUS CHRIST is the truth; and JESUS CHRIST is the life. The righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST, my brethren, muſt be imputed to you, or you can never have any intereſt in the blood of JESUS; your own works are but as filthy rags, for you are juſtified before GOD, without any reſpect to your works paſt, preſent, or to come. This doctrine is denyed by the learned rabbi's; but if they deny theſe truths of the goſpel, they muſt not be offended, though a child dare ſpeak to a doctor; and, in vindication of the cauſe of JESUS CHRIST, a child, a boy, by the Spirit of GOD, can ſpeak to the learned clergy of this age.

If I had a voice ſo great, and could ſpeak ſo loud, as that the whole world could hear me, I would cry, "Be not righteous over-much," by bringing your righteouſneſs to CHRIST, and by being righteous in your own eyes. Man muſt be abaſed, that GOD may be exalted.

The imputed righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST is a comfortable doctrine to all real chriſtians; and you ſinners, who aſk what you muſt do to be ſaved? how uncomfortable would it be, to tell you by good works, when, perhaps, you have never done one good work in all your life: this would be driving you to deſpair, indeed: no; "Believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and you ſhall be ſaved:" therefore none of you need go away deſpairing. Come to the LORD JESUS by faith, and he ſhall receive you. You have no righteouſneſs of your own to depend on. If you are ſaved, it is by the righteouſneſs of CHRIST, through his atonement, his making a ſacrifice for ſin: his righteouſneſs muſt be imputed to you, otherwiſe you cannot be ſaved. There is no difference between you, by nature, and the greateſt malefactor that ever was executed at *Tyburn:* the difference made, is all owing to the free, the rich, the undeſerved grace of GOD; this has made the difference. It is true, talking at this rate, will offend the phariſees, who do not like this levelling doctrine, (as they call it); but if ever you are brought to JESUS CHRIST by faith, you will experience the truth of it. Come by faith to JESUS CHRIST; do not come, phariſee-like, telling GOD what you have done, how often you have gone to church,

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how often you have received the ſacrament, faſted, prayed, or the like: no; come to CHRIST as poor, loſt, undone, damned ſinners; come to him in this manner, and he will accept of you: do not be rich in ſpirit, proud and exalted; for there is no bleſſing attends ſuch; but be ye poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of GOD; they ſhall be made members of his myſtical body here, and ſhall be ſo of the church triumphant hereafter. Acknowledge yourſelves as nothing at all, and when you have done all, ſay, "You are unprofitable ſervants." There is no ſalvation but by JESUS CHRIST; there is no other name given under heaven amongſt men, whereby we may be ſaved, but that of the LORD JESUS. GOD, out of CHRIST, is a conſuming fire; therefore ſtrive for an intereſt in his Son the LORD JESUS CHRIST; take him on the terms offered to you in the goſpel; accept of him in GOD's own way, lay hold on him by faith.

Do not think you are chriſtians; do not flatter yourſelves with being righteous enough, and good enough, becauſe you lead moral decent lives, do no one any harm, go to church and attend upon the outward means of grace; no, my brethren, you may do this, and a great deal more, and yet be very far from having a ſaving, experimental knowledge of JESUS CHRIST.

Beg of CHRIST to ſtrike home upon your hearts, that you may feel the power of religion. Indeed, you muſt feel the power of GOD here, or the wrath of GOD hereafter. Theſe are truths of the utmoſt conſequence; therefore, do not go contradicting, do not go blaſpheming away. Bleſſed be GOD, you are not ſuch cowards to run away for a little rain. I hope good things of you; I hope you have felt the power of GOD; and if GOD ſhould bring any of you to himſelf through this fooliſhneſs of preaching, you will have no reaſon to complain it was done by a youth, by a child: no; if I could be made an inſtrument to bring you to GOD, they may call me novice, enthuſiaſt, or what they pleaſe, I ſhould rejoice; yea, and I would rejoice.

O that ſome ſinner might be brought to JESUS CHRIST! Do not ſay I preach deſpair: I deſpair of no one, when I conſider GOD had mercy on ſuch a wretch as I, who was running in a full career to hell; I was haſting thither, but JESUS

CHRIST

CHRIST paſſed by and ſtopped me; JESUS CHRIST paſſed by me while I was in my blood, when I was polluted with filth; he paſſed by me, and bid me live. Thus I am a monument of GOD's free grace; and therefore, my brethren, I deſpair of none of you, when I conſider, I ſay, what a wretch I was. I am not ſpeaking now out of a falſe humility, a pretended ſanctity, as the phariſees call it: no, the truth in CHRIST I ſpeak, and therefore, men and devils do your worſt; I have a gracious Maſter will protect me; it is his work I am engaged in, and JESUS CHRIST will carry me above their rage.

Thoſe who are come here this night out of curioſity to hear what the babbler ſays; thoſe who come to ſpend an idle hour to find ſomething for an evening converſation at a coffee-houſe; or you who have ſtopped in your coaches as you paſſed by, remember that you have had JESUS CHRIST offered to you; I offer JESUS CHRIST to every one of you: perhaps you may not regard it becauſe it is in a field. But JESUS CHRIST is wherever his people meet in ſincerity and truth to worſhip him: he is not confined to church walls: he has met us here; many, very many of you know he has; and therefore you may believe on him with greater confidence.

Can you bear to think of a bleeding, panting, dying JESUS, offering himſelf up for ſinners, and you will not accept of him? Do not ſay, you are poor, and therefore are aſhamed to go to church, for GOD has ſent the goſpel out unto you. Do not harden your hearts: oppoſe not the will of JESUS.

O that I could ſpeak to your hearts, that my words would centre there. My heart is full of love to you. I would ſpeak, till I could ſpeak no more, ſo I could but bring you to CHRIST. I may never meet you all, perhaps, any more. The cloud of GOD's providence ſeems to be moving. GOD calls me by his providence away from you, for a while. GOD knows whether we ſhall ever ſee each other in the fleſh. At the day of judgment we ſhall all meet again. I earneſtly deſire your prayers. Pray that I may not only begin, *Jehu*-like, in the ſpirit, but that I may continue in it. Pray that I may not fall away, that I may not decline ſuffering for you, if I ſhould be called to it. Be earneſt, O be earneſt with GOD in my behalf, that while I am preaching to others, I may not be a caſt-away. Put up your prayers for me, I beſeech you. Go

not

not to the throne of grace, without carrying me upon y heart; for you know not what influence your prayers r have. As for you, my dear brethren, GOD knows my he I continually bear you on my mind, when I go in and before the LORD; and it is my earneſt deſire, you may periſh for lack of knowledge, but that he would ſend more miniſters to water what his own right-hand hath plan May the Antient of Days come forth upon his white ho and may all oppoſition fall to the ground. As we have be to bruiſe the ſerpent's head, we muſt expect he will br our heel. The devil will not let his kingdom fall with raging horribly. He will not ſuffer the miniſters of CHR to go on, without bringing his power to ſtop them. But not, my dear brethren, *David*, though a ſtripling, enco tered the great *Goliah*; and if we pray, GOD will give ſtrength againſt all our ſpiritual enemies. Shew your faith your works. Give the world the lye. Preſs forward. not ſtop, do not linger in your journey, but ſtrive for the m ſet before you. Fight the good fight of faith, and GOD give you ſpiritual mercies. I hope we ſhall all meet at right-hand of GOD. Strive, ſtrive to enter in at the ſt gate, that we may be borne to *Abraham*'s boſom, where and ſorrow ſhall ceaſe. No ſcoffer will be there, but we ſ ſee JESUS, who died for us; and not only ſee him, but with him for ever.

Which GOD, of his infinite mercy, &c.

SERMC

SERMON X.

A Preſervative againſt unſettled Notions, and want of Principles, in regard to Righteouſneſs and Chriſtian Perfection.

Being a more particular Anſwer to Doctor *Trapp's* Four Sermons upon the ſame Text.

To all the True Members of Chriſt's Holy Church.

Dear Fellow Chriſtians,

THE great, and indeed the only motive which prompted me to publiſh this ſermon, was the deſire of providing for your ſecurity from error, at a time when the deviators from, and falſe pretenders to truth, are ſo numerous, that the moſt diſcerning find it a matter of the greateſt difficulty to avoid being led aſtray by one or by other into downright falſhood. There is no running diviſions upon truth; like a mathematical point, it will neither admit of ſubtraction nor addition: And as it is indiviſible in its nature, there is no ſplitting the difference, where truth is concerned. Irreligion and enthuſiaſm are diametrical oppoſites, and true piety between both, like the center of an infinite line, is at an equal infinite diſtance from the one and the other, and therefore can never admit of a coalition with either. The one erring by defect, the other by exceſs. But whether we err by defect, or exceſs, is of little importance, if we are equally wide of the mark, as we certainly are in either caſe. For whatever is leſs than truth, cannot be truth; and whatever is more than true muſt be falſe.

Wherefore,

Wherefore, as the whole of this great nation ſeems now more than ever in danger of being hurried into one or the other of theſe equally pernicious extremes, irreligion or fanaticiſm, I thought myſelf more than ordinarily obliged to rouze your, perhaps, drowſy vigilance, by warning you of the nearneſs of your peril; cautioning you from leaning towards either ſide, though but to peep at the ſlippery precipice; and ſtepping between you and error, before it comes nigh enough to grapple with you. The happy medium of true chriſtian piety, in which it has pleaſed the mercy of GOD to eſtabliſh you, is built on a firm rock; "and the gates of hell ſhall never prevail againſt it." While then you ſtand ſteadily upright in the fulneſs of the faith, falſhood and ſin ſhall labour in vain to approach you; whereas, the leaſt familiarity with error, will make you giddy, and if once you ſtagger in principles, your ruin is almoſt inevitable.

But now I have cautioned you of the danger you are in from the enemies who threaten your ſubverſion, I hope your own watchfulneſs will be ſufficient to guard you from any ſurpriſe. And from their own aſſaults you have nothing to fear, ſince while you perſiſt in the firm reſolution, through GOD's grace, to keep them out, irreligion and enthuſiaſm, falſhood and vice, impiety and falſe piety, will combine in vain to force an entrance into your hearts.

Take then, my dearly beloved fellow-members of CHRIST's myſtical body, take the friendly caution I give you in good part, and endeavour to profit by it: attend wholly to the ſaving truths I here deliver to you, and be perſuaded, that they are uttered by one who has your eternal ſalvation as much at heart as his own.

"And thou, O LORD JESUS CHRIST, fountain of all truth,
"whence all wiſdom flows, open the underſtandings of
"thy people to the light of thy true faith, and touch their
"hearts with thy grace, that they may both be able to ſee,
"and willing to perform what thou requireſt of them.
"Drive away from us every cloud of error and perverſity;
"guard us alike from irreligion and falſe pretenſions to
"piety; and lead us on perpetually towards that perfec-
"tion to which thou haſt taught us to aſpire; that keep-
"ing us here in a conſtant imitation of thee, and peace-
"ful

" ful union with each other, thou mayeſt at length bring
" us to that everlaſting glory, which thou haſt promiſed
" to all ſuch as ſhall endeavour to be perfect, even as the
" Father who is in heaven is perfect, who with thee and
" the Holy Ghoſt lives and reigns one GOD, world with-
" out end! *Amen*, *Amen*.

ECCLES. vii. 16.

Be not righteous over-much, neither make thyſelf over-wiſe; Why ſhouldeſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?

RIGHTEOUS over-much! may one ſay; Is there any danger of that? Is it even poſſible? Can we be too good? If we give any credit to the expreſs word of GOD, we cannot be too good, we cannot be righteous over-much. The injunction given by GOD to *Abraham* is very ſtrong: " Walk before me, and be thou perfect." The ſame he again lays upon all *Iſrael*, in the eighteenth of *Deuteronomy*: " Thou ſhalt be perfect, and without blemiſh, with the LORD thy GOD." And leſt any ſhould think to excuſe themſelves from this obligation, by ſaying, it ceaſed when the old law was aboliſhed, our bleſſed Saviour ratified and explained it: " Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." So that until our perfection ſurpaſſes that of our heavenly Father, we can never be too good nor righteous over-much; and as it is impoſſible we ſhould ever ſurpaſs, or even come up to him in the perfection of goodneſs and righteouſneſs, it follows in courſe that we never can be good or righteous in exceſs. Nevertheleſs Doctor *Trapp* has found out that we may be righteous over-much, and has taken no ſmall pains, with much agitation of ſpirit, to prove that it is a *great folly and weakneſs*, nay, a *great ſin*. " O LORD! rebuke thou his ſpirit, and grant that this falſe doctrine may not be publiſhed to his confuſion in the day of judgment!"

But if what this haſty, this deluded man advances had been true, could there be any occaſion, however, of warning againſt it in theſe times, " when the danger (as he himſelf to his con-

" fuſion

" fuſion owns) is on the contrary extreme; when all manner " of vice and wickedneſs abounds to a degree almoſt unheard " of!" I anſwer for the preſent, that " there muſt be herefies amongſt you, that they who are approved may be made manifeſt."

However, this earthly-minded miniſter of a new goſpel, hath taken a text which ſeems to favour his naughty purpoſe, of cleaning the well-diſpoſed little ones of CHRIST from that perfect purity of heart and ſpirit, which is neceſſary to all ſuch as mean to live to our LORD JESUS. O LORD, what ſhall become of thy flock, when their ſhepherds betray them into the hands of the ravenous wolf! when a miniſter of thy word perverts it to overthrow thy kingdom, and to deſtroy ſcripture with ſcripture!

Solomon, in the perſon of a deſponding, ignorant, indolent liver, ſays to the man of righteouſneſs: " Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyſelf overwiſe: Why ſhouldeſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?" But muſt my angry, over-ſighted brother *Trapp*, therefore, perſonate a character ſo unbecoming his function, merely to overthrow the expreſs injunction of the LORD to us; which obliges us never to give over purſuing and thirſting after the perfect righteouſneſs of CHRIST, until we reſt in him? Father, forgive him, for he knows not what he ſays!

What advantage might not ſatan gain over the elect, if the falſe conſtruction, put upon this text by that unſeeing teacher, ſhould prevail! Yet though he bluſhes not to aſſiſt ſatan to bruiſe our heel, I ſhall endeavour to bruiſe the heads of both, by ſhewing,

I. *Firſt*, The genuine ſenſe of the text in queſtion.

II. The character of the perſons, who are to be ſuppoſed ſpeaking here: And

III. The character of the perſons ſpoken to.

From whence will naturally reſult theſe conſequences.

Firſt, That the Doctor was groſly (LORD grant he was not maliciouſly) miſtaken in his explanatory ſermon on this text, as well as in the applicaion of it.

Secondly,

Secondly, That he is a teacher and approver of worldly maxims.

Thirdly, That he is of courſe an enemy to perfect righteouſneſs in men, through CHRIST JESUS, and, therefore, no friend to CHRIST: And, therefore, that no one ought to be deluded by the falſe doctrine he advances, to beguile the innocent, and deceive, if poſſible, even the elect.

I. To come at the true ſenſe of the text in queſtion, it will be neceſſary to look back, to the preceding verſe, where the wiſe man, reflecting on the vanities of his youth, puts on for a moment his former character. "All things, have I ſeen in the days of my vanity: (and among the reſt) there is a juſt man that periſheth in his righteouſneſs, and there is a wicked man who prolongeth his life in his wickedneſs." Now it is very plain, that he is not here talking of a man, who is righteous over-much, in the Doctor's manner of underſtanding the words, that is, "faulty, and criminal by exceſs." For on one ſide he commends him for being a juſt man, and full of righteouſneſs, and yet on the other tells us, that his righteouſneſs is the ſhortening of his life. Whereas, had he looked upon his periſhing in righteouſneſs to be an over-righteouſneſs, he would never have called him a juſt man. Neither by a wicked man, can he mean a man given up to the utmoſt exceſs of wickedneſs, ſince he tells us, that he prolongeth his life in (or by) his wickedneſs. Who does not know, that the exceſs of almoſt every kind of vice, is of itſelf a ſhortener of life. So that the whole oppoſition and contraſt lies between a good man, and a bad man. A good man whoſe goodneſs ſhortens his life, a bad man whoſe iniquity lengthens his life, or at leaſt is not exceſſive enough to ſhorten the thread of it. *Solomon*, abſorbed in theſe reflections, ſpeaks here by way of *profopopeia*, not the ſenſe of *Solomon*, the experienced, the learned, the wiſe; but of the former *Solomon*, a vain young fellow, full of ſelf-love, and the ſtrong deſires of life. In the quality of ſuch a one then, he looks with the ſame eye upon the righteous man, who periſhes in his righteouſneſs, as he would on a wicked one, who ſhould periſh in his wickedneſs. For it is neither the righteouſneſs of the one, nor the wickedneſs of the other, that offends him, but the ſuperlative degrees of both; which

which tending equally to ſhorten life, he looks upon them as equally oppoſite to the ſelf-love he fondles within him. And, therefore, he deems an exceſs of debauchery as great an enemy to the laſting enjoyment of the pleaſures of life, as an extraordinary righteouſneſs would be. Well then might he ſay to the latter, in this character, "Be not over-much wicked, neither be thou fooliſh; why ſhouldſt thou die before thy time?" And to the former: "Be not righteous over-much, neither make thyſelf over-wiſe: Why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?"

What wonder then, that a youth of ſprightlineſs and ſenſe, but led away by ſelf-love to be fond of the pleaſures and enjoyments of life, when attained without hurry, and poſſeſſed without riſk; what wonder, I ſay, that ſuch a youth ſhould conceive an equal diſlike to the ſuperlative degrees of virtue and vice, and, therefore, adviſe ſuch of his companions as give into the exceſs of debauchery, to refrain from it: as it muſt infallibly tend to clog their underſtandings, ſtupify their ſenſes, and entail upon their conſtitutions a train of infirmities, which cannot but debilitate their natural vigour, and ſhorten their days? "Be not over-much wicked, neither be thou fooliſh: Why ſhouldſt thou die before thy time?" What wonder, that the ſame ſelf-love ſhould prompt him to diſſuade ſuch of his friends or acquaintance, as he wiſhes to have for companions, and countenancers of his worldly-minded purſuits, from purſuing righteouſneſs and wiſdom to a degree that muſt deſtroy in them all taſte of earthly pleaſures, and may poſſibly impair their conſtitutions, and forward their end? "Be not righteous over-much, neither make thyſelf overwiſe: Why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?"

This is the ſenſe in which *Solomon* (placing himſelf in the ſtate of vanity of his youth) ſpeaks to the one, and the other: to the righteous, and to the ungodly. This is the true, genuine ſenſe of the letter; and every other ſenſe put upon it, is falſe and groundleſs, and wreſted rather to pervert than explain the truth of the text. O chriſtian ſimplicity, whither art thou fled? Why will not the clergy ſpeak truth? And why muſt this falſe prophet ſuffer thy people, O LORD, to believe a lye? they have held the truth in unrighteouſneſs. Raiſe up, I beſeech thee, O LORD, ſome true paſtors, who may acquaint them

hem with the nature and neceſſity of perfect righteouſneſs, nd lead them to that love of chriſtian perfection which the ngry-minded, pleaſure-taking Doctor *Trapp*, labours to divert hem from, by teaching, that "all chriſtians muſt have to do "with ſome vanities."

Is not the meaning of this text plain to the weakeſt capaity? I have here given it to you, as I have it from the mouth of the royal preacher himſelf. I have made uſe of no "philoſophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after CHRIST," to impoſe a fleſhly ſenſe upon you, for the ſenſe of the word of GOD. No, I have given you a natural expoſition, obvious from the very words themſelves. Hence you may ſee, my fellow-ſtrugglers in righteouſneſs, how groſly our angry adverſary is miſtaken in his explanation of this text. LORD! open his eyes, and touch his heart; and convert him, and all thoſe erring miniſters, who have ſeen vain and fooliſh things for thy people, and have not diſcovered their iniquity, to turn away thy captivity. For they have erred through wine, and through ſtrong drink are out of the way: The prieſt and the prophet have erred through ſtrong drink, they are ſwallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through ſtrong drink, they err in viſion, they ſtumble in judgment.

It is plain from the words of the text, that the royal Preacher was ſpeaking in the perſon of a vain worldling, when he ſaid, "Be not righteous over-much;" whereby he meant to exhort the truly righteous not to be diſmayed, terrified, or diſturbed from their conſtant purſuit of greater and greater perfection of righteouſneſs, until they reſt in CHRIST; notwithſtanding the deriſion, fleſhly perſuaſion, ill-treatment and perſecution of worldly men: Who, one day, repenting and groaning for anguiſh of ſpirit, ſhall ſay within themſelves, "Theſe were they whom we had ſometime in deriſion, and a proverb of reproach. We fools, accounted their lives madneſs; and their end to be without honour. How are they numbered among the children of GOD, and their lot is among the ſaints!"

How blind then is the application (not to ſay perverſe) which this ſelf-wiſe clergyman makes from the text, to ſuch as, following the advice of the apoſtle, (*Coloſſ.* iii. 2.) "ſet

"their affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Muſt haſtineſs in anger get the better of ſenſe and truth? Muſt the people be miſled becauſe the paſtor cannot, or will not ſee? Or muſt the injunction of CHRIST, "Be perfect, even as your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect," give place to the maxim of the heathen *Tully:* The greateſt reproach to a philoſopher, is to confute his doctrine by his practice; if this be the caſe, alas, what a deplorable, unſpeakably deplorable condition is that of ſome chriſtians! Wherefore, "thus ſaith the LORD concerning the prophets who make his people to err, that bite with their teeth and cry peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war againſt him: therefore night ſhall be unto you, that ye ſhall not have a viſion, and it ſhall be dark unto you, that ye ſhall not divine, and the ſun ſhall go down over the prophets, and the day ſhall be dark over them.

But I will leave theſe lovers of darkneſs, and turn to you, O beloved, elect of GOD! I beſeech you, by the bowels of CHRIST, ſuffer not yourſelves to be deceived by their flattering, ſin-ſoothing ſpeeches. "Be not of that rebellious people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of the LORD: who ſay to the ſeers, ſee not; and to the prophets, propheſy not unto us right things, ſpeak unto us ſmooth things, propheſy deceits." Follow not thoſe, who flatter you in the vanities they practiſe themſelves. O may you never be of the number of thoſe, in the perſon of whom *Solomon* here ſays, "Be not righteous over-much:" for their character is the character of the beaſt.

II. The character of the perſons, who are to be ſuppoſed ſpeaking here in the text, is in a word the ſame with the character of thoſe whom *Solomon* here perſonates: who, as is already ſhewn, are a vain ſet of men, neither righteous enough to have an habitual deſire of improving virtue to its perfection, nor quite ſo flagitious as to give into ſelf-deſtroying vices: in a word, they are ſelf-lovers, the ſole end of whoſe purſuits, whether indifferent, bad, or laudable in themſelves, is ſelf-enjoyment. Inſomuch that they look upon virtue and vice, righteouſneſs and wickedneſs, with the ſame eye, and their fondneſs or averſion for both is alike, as their

different

different degrees appear to be the means to enhance and prolong the enjoyment of pleaſure, or to leſſen and ſhorten thoſe pleaſures. Thus any virtue, while it is kept within ſuch bounds as may render it ſubſervient to the pleaſurable degrees of vice, will meet with no oppoſition from them; on the contrary, they will even commend it. But the moment it becomes a reſtraint to *vice in moderation* (if I may be allowed to make uſe of terms adequate to their ſyſtem) from that moment it gives offence, and they put in their caveat, "Be not righteous over-much." In like manner, vice, while confined to certain limits, which rather improve than obſtruct pleaſures, is with them a deſirable good; but no ſooner does it launch out into any depth, ſufficient to drown and diminiſh the reliſh of thoſe pleaſures, than they declare open war againſt it; "Be not over-much wicked." And the reaſon they aſſign for their oppoſition in both caſes, is the ſame: "why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thyſelf? Why ſhouldſt thou die before thy time?" Such is the prudence of the world, the fleſh, and the devil. Such the maxims of theſe refined libertines, ſo much the more dangerous as they are leſs obvious; ſo much the more inſinuating, as they are removed from certain extravagancies capable of ſhocking every man who has the leaſt ſenſe and delicacy. O, LORD, how true is it, that the ſons of darkneſs are wiſer in their generation than the ſons of light!

You are not then, beloved in the LORD, to imagine that your greateſt oppoſition, in ſtruggling for perfect righteouſneſs, is to come from profligates, from men whoſe enormous vices create horror even to themſelves: no, your moſt dangerous, moſt formidable enemies, are the kind of men I have painted to you, who render vice reliſhable with a mixture of apparent virtue, and cloath wickedneſs in the apparel of righteouſneſs: "Beware of them, for they come to you in the cloathing of ſheep, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

This perverſe generation will enſnare you into ungodlineſs, by ſeeming oppoſitions to vice, and allow you to ſwallow the ſeemings of virtue and righteouſneſs like an emetic, only to puke forth the reality of them. They paint black, white, and the white they convert into black. Not content with ſeeming what they are not, they labour to make you, what

they are. Righteouſneſs and wickedneſs they interweave in an artful tiſſue, capable of deceiving the very elect, and difficult for the moſt diſcerning among them to unravel; as alms-giving and avarice, pride and humility, temperance and luxury, are dextrouſly blended together; while as mutual curbs to each other, they combine to ſtem the tide of impediments to worldly enjoyment, which might flow from extraordinary degrees on either ſide. Thus "Almſgiving (you are told) is very excellent," and you believe the propoſition, without knowing the particular ſenſe it is ſpoken in, which is, that alms-giving is an excellent curb upon avarice, by preſerving a rich man from ſuch a ſuperlative love of money as deprives him of the ſelf-enjoyment of it. And upon the ſtrength of this belief, the worldly-minded man, who labours to deceive you, gains credit enough with you to eſtabliſh this maxim, that all ſuperlative degrees of alms-giving, are *great ſins*, and that a man muſt never ſell all he has and give it to the poor, becauſe ſome may have families of their own, and ought to make ſufficient proviſion for them, according to that proverb "Charity begins at home;" when no one, at leaſt ſcarce any one, is wiſe enough to know, when he has a ſufficiency. O LORD, which are we to believe, theſe worldlings, or thee. If thou doſt deceive us, why doſt thou threaten us with puniſhments, if we do not heed thee? And if the world is deceitful, ſhall we not flee from it to cleave to thee?

"Pride is a great ſin," even with theſe worldlings, inaſmuch as the external exceſſes of it, may obſtruct the way to many ambitious terminations of view, and its internal agitations are the deſtruction of that peace, to which even ſelf-love aſpires; beſides, the frequent extravagancy of its motion may not only be prejudicial to health, but a ſhortner of life. And, therefore, no wonder they ſhould object againſt it. "Be not over much wicked; why ſhouldſt thou die before thy time?" For this reaſon, they look upon a little mixture of humility to be not only commendable, but even neceſſary to curb the extravagant ſallies of an over-bearing pride. But then a ſuperlative degree of humility, that is, humility free from the leaſt tincture of pride or vanity, which is the ſame with them, as "*an over-ſtrained humility*, is a fault as well "as folly;" becauſe, forſooth, it is an expediment to the ſelf-enjoyment

enjoyment of the world and its pleaſures; "All chriſtians "muſt have to do with ſome vanities, or elſe they muſt needs "go out of the world indeed; for the world itſelf is all over "vanity." 'Tis nothing, therefore, ſurpriſing, my brethren, to ſee a man of this caſt of mind making a vain oſtentation of his little ſuperficial acquaintance, with the antient *Greeks* and *Romans*. What is this but acting conformably to his own principle, that "all chriſtians muſt have to do with ſome vanities?" And ſhall we wonder to hear ſuch a one prefer their writings, to thoſe of an apoſtle; or be aſtoniſhed to ſee him wound the apoſtle with raillery, through your ſides, for wiſhing to know nothing but JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified? No, with him it is conſiſtency to laugh and reprove you out of the perfection of righteouſneſs, which, however he may play with terms, is with him the ſame as being righteous over-much; but with you it would be inconſiſtency, who ought to know no difference between being righteous, and living in a perpetual, habitual deſire of being ſuperlatively ſo. It is no more then, than you ought to expect to hear ſuch advocates for the world cry out to you, "Be not righteous over-much: why ſhould you deſtroy yourſelves?" But, O LORD, ſurely this is not the ſame voice which tells us, that unleſs we humble ourſelves like unto children, we ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, and that he is greateſt there, who humbles himſelf the moſt like a child! But what will not men advance who are drunk with paſſion, and intoxicated with ſelf-love?

"The vice of intemperance in eating, and drinking, is "plain to every body," they own. And, therefore, they give it up as an exceſs which cannot but tend to the impairing of health, and ſhortening of life: nay, it drowns the very reliſh of pleaſure in actual eating and drinking. Hence will every refined debauchee exclaim againſt it with Dr. *Trapp*: "Be not over much wicked: why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?" Little ſobriety, ſay they, is requiſite to give a zeſt to luxury and worldly pleaſures. But too much of it is too much, "to "eat nothing but bread and herbs, and drink nothing but "water, unleſs there be a particular reaſon for it (ſuch per-"haps as Doctor *Cheyne* may aſſign) is folly at beſt, (that is, "even though it be done for CHRIST's ſake) therefore

"no virtue;" "Be not then righteous over-much, why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?" And if you ſhould anſwer theſe carnally-minded men with the words of the apoſtle, *Rom.* viii. "We are debtors, not to the fleſh, to live after the fleſh: For if we live after the fleſh, we ſhall die: but if we, through the ſpirit, do mortify the deeds of the fleſh, we ſhall live." If you anſwer them thus, they will tell you, "this is teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." And it will be to as little purpoſe to anſwer them, with what St. *Paul* ſays elſewhere (*Rom.* xiv. 17.) "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt:" They will not bluſh to tell you, that "our bleſſed Saviour came eating and drinking, nay "worked a miracle to make wine (at an entertainment) when "it is plain there had been more drank than was neceſſary." To ſuch lengths does the love of the world hurry theſe ſelf-fond, merry-making worldlings! Tell them of ſelf-denial, they will not hear you, it is an encroachment upon the pleaſures of life, and may ſhorten it of a few days, which you are never ſure of poſſeſſing; it is being "righteous over-much: why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?" JESUS, you will ſay, tells us (*John* xii. 25.) "He that loveth his life ſhall loſe it, and he that hateth his life in this world, ſhall keep it unto life eternal." But this and the like, they will inform you, "are hyperbolical phraſes." Now what ſignifies minding JESUS, when he ſpeaks hyperbolically, that is, ſpeaks more than is ſtrictly true. Yet, O LORD JESUS, grant us to mind thee, whatever theſe worldlings may ſay; remind us, that if any man will come after thee, he muſt deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow thee! O how enlarging is it to the ſoul, to take up the croſs of CHRIST and follow him!

But you are charged, ye beloved lovers of perfect righteouſneſs, with extravagances. You allow of "no ſort of "recreation or diverſion; nothing but an univerſal mortifi-"cation and ſelf-denial; no pleaſure but from religion only:" you teach "that the bodily appetites muſt not be in the leaſt "degree gratified, any farther than is abſolutely neceſſary to "keep body and ſoul together, and mankind in being: No "allowances are to be made for melancholy misfortunes, or "human infirmity: grief muſt be cured only by prayer;" (a horrid

horrid grievance this, to ſuch as think prayer burdenſome at beſt) "To divert it by worldly amuſements is carnal." A heavy charge this: but leſt it ſhould ſeem ſo only to thoſe carnal perſons, who are reſolved to give way to their carnal appetites; what you look upon as adviſable only, theſe perverters of truth inſinuate to be looked upon by you as indiſpenſable duties. And leſt prevarication ſhould fail, downright falſhoods muſt be placed to your account, "ſo that to "taſte an agreeable fruit, or ſmell to a roſe, muſt be unlaw-"ful with you," however you diſown it. But O, my beloved chriſtians, be not diſcouraged from the purſuit of perfect righteouſneſs by theſe or ſuch vile miſrepreſentations. For "bleſſed are ye when men ſhall revile you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely for the ſake of CHRIST JESUS. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: For great is your reward in heaven: for ſo perſecuted they the prophets who were before you."

Thus far, then, may ſuffice to ſhew clearly with what dangerous views the worldly-minded men, whom *Solomon* perſonates in the text before us, lay ſiege to your ſouls in fair ſpeeches. What I have ſaid, is enough to convince you, that their character is that of the beaſt, whom St. *John*, in the Revelations, "ſaw coming up from the ſea (that is, the flagitious world) with ſeven heads." And what ſhall we ſay of a man, a clergyman, who teaches, and is an advocate for their perverſe doctrines? May we not, nay, muſt we not, for the glory of GOD, and your good, inform you, that he is a "Teacher and approver of worldly maxims." May I not, nay, muſt I not, give you this caution with the royal preacher: "When he ſpeaketh fair, believe him not, for there are ſeven abominations in his heart?" But how different is the character I have given you, from the character of the perſons to whom the text under conſideration is ſpoken: that is, the character of all ſuch, as, like you, are reſolved never to reſt, 'till they reſt in CHRIST JESUS. To ſhew this, I ſhall now paſs to my third point.

III. To what ſort of perſons does *Solomon* in the character of a worldling addreſs himſelf, when he ſays, "Be not righteous over-much, neither make thyſelf over-wiſe: why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?" Not to the wicked, 'tis plain; for beſides

ſides that it would have been an unneceſſary precaution, he turns to theſe in the next verſe with another kind of warning, which however has ſome analogy with this. "Be not over-much wicked, neither be thou fooliſh, why ſhouldſt thou die before thy time?" Was it then to the righteous, in a common way; that is, to ſuch as content themſelves with the obſervance of the abſolute eſſentials of GOD's laws? Surely our adverſaries will not allow this, unleſs they be of opinion, that to be righteous at all, is to be righteous over-much. And yet it cannot poſſibly be ſuppoſed that the perſons ſpoken to, are men perfectly righteous; ſince, as I proved to you, in the introduction of this diſcourſe, till we come up to the perfection of our heavenly father, we can never be righteous *enough*, much leſs *perfectly* righteous: wherefore, as in this life, men cannot attain to the perfection of their heavenly father, it follows in courſe that the perſons here ſpoken to, cannot be men perfectly righteous, there being no ſuch men exiſting; for as St. *John* ſaith, "If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us." Alas, O LORD, when ſhall we be delivered from the body of this death?

It remains, that the perſons ſpoken to, in the text, are ſuch only, as perſiſting ſtedfaſtly in a firm adherence to all the eſſential laws of GOD, content not themſelves with the practice of common virtues in a common degree, but live in a perpetual habitude of deſires, ſtruggles, and yearnings towards an intimate union with CHRIST, the perfection of righteouſneſs. They are not of the number of thoſe righteous with indifference, who would fain blend the ſervice of GOD and mammon, would fain have CHRIST and the world for their maſters, and halting between two, like the children of *Iſrael* of old, with their faces to heaven, and their hearts to the earth, are neither hot nor cold. Alas, would they were cold or hot! But "becauſe they are luke-warm, and neither cold nor hot, the LORD ſhall ſpew them out of his mouth."

Not ſo the perſons ſpoken to in my text; not ſo you, O beloved in GOD, who having ſhaken off the world and worldly affections, to run the more ſwiftly after righteouſneſs, hate your own lives for the ſake of CHRIST. Happy, happy are all you, who put on our LORD JESUS, and with him the new

new man! "You are the true circumciſion which worſhip GOD in ſpirit, and rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and have no confidence in the fleſh."

What wonder then, chriſtians? To you I ſpeak, all ye lovers and ſtrugglers after the perfect righteouſneſs of your divine Maſter CHRIST; what wonder is it, that you ſhould be charged with enthuſiaſm, with folly, with fanaticiſm and madneſs? Were not the apoſtles ſo before you, when they preached CHRIST JESUS? Nay were they not reputed drunk with wine? Can you be amazed at it in an age, "when all manner of vice abounds to a degree almoſt unheard of," when the land is full of adulterers, and becauſe of ſwearing the land mourneth. O how is the faithful city become an harlot! my heart within me is broken, becauſe of the clergy, all my bones ſhake? I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome; becauſe of the LORD, and becauſe of the words of his holineſs, perverted by this deluded clergyman.

When the clergy, whom CHRIST has appointed to teach his people "to walk before him and be perfect," become teachers of worldly maxims, what can be expected from the laity? It is notorious, that for the moralizing iniquity of the prieſt, the land mourns. They have preached and lived many ſincere perſons out of the church of *England*. They endeavour to make you vain: (as the prophets did in the days of *Jeremiah*) they ſpeak a viſion out of their own mouth, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. In a word, "both "prophet and prieſt are prophane, and do wickedneſs in the "very houſe of the LORD." Nay, they ſay ſtill to them who deſpiſe the LORD, The LORD hath ſaid, ye ſhall have peace; and they ſay to every one who walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil ſhall come upon you.

Such is the language, my beloved lovers of chriſtian perfection, which the indolent, earthly-minded, pleaſure-taking clergy of the church of *England*, uſe to ſtrengthen the hands of evil-doers, that none may return from his wickedneſs. Such is the doctrine of the letter-learned divine, who has dipped his pen in gall, to decry perfect righteouſneſs, and to delude you from it, with a falſe application of that text ſo groſly miſunderſtood by him: "Be not righteous over-much, neither

neither be thou over-wiſe: why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?" But ſuffer not yourſelves, my fellow-chriſtians, to be deluded by him. For as I have already ſhewn to you, he is groſly (LORD grant he was not malicioufly) miſtaken in his manner of explaining this text; and ſo far from making a right application of it according to the wiſe, the experienced *Solomon*'s intention, he acts the character of a vain libertine, full of ſelf-love, and earthly deſires, whom *Solomon* but perſonated, to ridicule. But the doctor by realizing that character in himſelf, becomes the teacher and approver of worldly maxims, which he applies to you, on purpoſe to deſtroy in you the yearnings after perfect righteouſneſs in CHRIST. May I not then, nay, muſt I not warn you, my beloved, that this man is an enemy to perfect righteous in men through CHRIST JESUS, and, therefore, no friend to CHRIST? O that my head was an ocean, and my eyes fountains of tears, to weep night and day for this poor creature, this hood-winked member of the clergy.

Pray you, O true chriſtians, pray and ſigh mightily to the LORD; importune him in the behalf of this erring paſtor; pray that he would vouchſafe to open the eyes, and touch the ſtubborn heart of this ſcribe, that he may become better inſtructed. Otherwiſe, as the LORD ſaid by the mouth of his true prophet *Jeremiah*, "Behold, I will feed him with wormwood, and make him drink the water of gall; for from him is prophaneneſs gone forth into all the land."

This good, however, hath he done by attempting to ſhew the folly, ſin, and danger of that which he miſcalls being righteous over-much, that is, being ſuperlatively righteous, in deſire and habitual ſtruggles; he has thereby given me the occaſion to ſhew you, brethren, in the courſe of this ſermon, the great and real folly, ſin, and danger of not being righteous enough; which, perhaps, I ſhould never have thought of doing, had not his falſe doctrine pointed out to me the neceſſity of doing it. Thus does the all-wiſe providence of GOD, make uſe of the very vices of men to draw good out of evil; and chuſe their very errors to confound falſehood and make way for truth. Though this ſhould be more than our angry adverſary intended, yet, LORD, reward him according to his works; and ſuffer him no longer

to

to be haſty in his words, that we may have room to entertain better hopes of him for the future.

Bleſſed be GOD for ſending you better guides! I am convinced it was his divine will: our dear fellow-creature, Doctor *Trapp*, falling into ſuch errors, has given ſo great a ſhock to the ſound religion of *chriſtian perfection*, that unleſs I had oppoſed him, I verily believe the whole flock who liſtened to his doctrine, would have been ſcattered abroad like ſheep having no ſhepherd. "But woe to ye ſcribes and phariſees! Woe be unto the paſtors that deſtroy and ſcatter the ſheep of my paſture, ſaith the LORD."

Full well I know that this ſermon will not be pleaſing to my poor peeviſh adverſary; but correction is not to pleaſure but to profit: few children can be brought willingly to kiſs the rod which rebuketh them; though, when they become of riper underſtanding, they will bleſs the hand that guided it. Thus ſhall this angry man, I truſt, thank me one day for reproving him, when his reaſon ſhall be reſtored to him by the light of the holy ſpirit. O LORD, grant thou this light unto him, and ſuffer him to ſee with what bowels of pity and tenderneſs I love him in thee, even while I chaſten him.

Neither am I inſenſible, brethren, how offenſive my words will be to worldlings in general, who loving falſehood better than truth, and the fleſh before the ſpirit, will ſtill prefer the doctor's ſin-ſoothing doctrines to the plain goſpel verities preached by me. O how my ſoul pities them. But I have done my duty, I waſh my hands, and am innocent of the blood of all. I have not ſought to pleaſe my hearers, but have ſpoken plain truth though it ſhould offend. For what things were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for CHRIST; and hope I ſhall ever do ſo. Not that I preſume to think myſelf already perfect. But "I preſs forward towards the mark, for the prize of the high-calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS."

None of us, as I before told you, can boaſt of having attained the ſummit of perfection; though, he is the neareſt to it, who is wideſt from the appetites of the fleſh, and he ſtands the higheſt, who is the lowlieſt in his own eſteem: wherefore, as many of us as have made any advances towards

CHRIST

CHRIST and his kingdom, "whereto we have already at-
"tained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same
"thing."

Walk not then, brethren, according to the ways of the world: but be followers of CHRIST together with me. And if any, even an angel of light, should presume to teach you any other gospel than that which I have here taught you, let him be accursed. "For you will find many walking, like such of whom I have told you already, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of CHRIST: whose end is destruction, whose GOD is their belly: and whose glory is in their shame, for they mind worldly things. But your conversation is in heaven, from whence also you look for the Saviour, the LORD JESUS CHRIST: who shall change your vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue even all things unto himself," even the stubborn heart of our perverse adversary.

Which GOD of his infinite mercy grant, &c.

SERMON

SERMON XI.

The Benefits of an Early Piety.

eached at *Bow* Church, *London*, before the Religious Societies.

ECCLES. xii. 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth.

THE amiableneſs of religion in itſelf, and the innumerable advantages that flow from it to ſociety in gene- as well as to each ſincere profeſſor in particular, cannot recommend it to the choice of every conſiderate perſon, make, even wicked men, as they wiſh to die the death, n their more ſober intervals, to envy the life of the righte-. And, indeed, we muſt do the world ſo much juſtice, o confeſs, that the queſtion about religion does not uſu- ariſe from a diſpute whether it be neceſſary or not (for ſt men ſee the neceſſity of doing ſomething for the ſalva- of their ſouls;) but when is the beſt time to ſet about it. ſons are convinced by univerſal experience, that the firſt ys or endeavours towards the attainment of religion, are nded with ſome difficulty and trouble, and therefore they ıld willingly defer the beginning of ſuch a ſeemingly grateful work, as long as they can. The wanton pro- al, who is ſpending his ſubſtance in riotous living, cries, ittle more pleaſure, a little more ſenſuality, and then ill be ſober in earneſt. The covetous worldling, that ploys all his care and pains in "heaping up riches, hough he cannot tell who ſhall gather them," does not

flatter himſelf that this will do always; but hopes with the rich fool in the goſpel, to lay up goods for a few more years on earth, and then he will begin to lay up treaſures in heaven. And, in ſhort, thus it is that moſt people are convinced of the neceſſity of being religious ſome time or another; but then, like *Felix*, they put off the acting ſuitably to their convictions, 'till, what they imagine, a more convenient ſeaſon: whereas, would we be ſo humble as to be guided by the experience and counſel of the wiſeſt men, we ſhould learn that youth is the fitteſt ſeaſon for religion; "Remember now thy creator, (ſays *Solomon*) in the days of thy youth." By the word *remember*, we are not to underſtand a bare ſpeculative remembrance, or calling to mind, (for that, like a dead faith, will profit us nothing,) but ſuch a remembrance as will conſtrain us to obedience, and oblige us out of gratitude, to perform all that the LORD our GOD ſhall require of us. For as the forgetting GOD in ſcripture language, implies a total neglect of our duty, in like manner remembring him ſignifies a perfect performance of it: ſo that, when *Solomon* ſays, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," it is the ſame as if he had ſaid, keep GOD's commandments; or, in other words, be religious in the days of thy youth, thereby implying, that youth is the moſt proper ſeaſon for it.

I ſhall in the following diſcourſe,

Firſt, Endeavour to make good the wiſe man's propoſition, implied in the words of the text, and to ſhew that youth is the fitteſt ſeaſon for religion.

Secondly, By way of motive, I ſhall conſider the many unſpeakable advantages that will ariſe from, "Remembering our Creator in the days of our youth." And,

Thirdly, I ſhall conclude with a word or two of exhortation to the younger part of this audience.

Firſt, I am to make good the wiſe man's propoſition, implied in the words of the text, and to ſhew that youth is the fitteſt ſeaſon for religion: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." But to proceed more clearly in this argument, it may not be improper, firſt, to explain what

 I mean

mean by the word *religion*. By this term, then, I would ot be underſtood to mean a bare outward profeſſion or naming he name of CHRIST; for we are told, that many who have ven propheſied in his name, and in his name caſt out devils, hall notwithſtanding be rejected by him at the laſt day: nor would I underſtand by it, barely being admitted into CHRIST's church by baptiſm; for then *Simon Magus*, *Arius*, and the hereſiarchs of old, might paſs for religious perſons; for theſe were baptized: nor yet the receiving the other ſeal of the covenant, for then *Judas* himſelf might be canonized for a ſaint; nor indeed do I mean any or all of theſe together, conſidered by themſelves; but a thorough, real, inward change of nature, wrought in us by the powerful operations of the Holy Ghoſt, conveyed to and nouriſhed in our hearts, by a conſtant uſe of all the means of grace, evidenced by a good life, and bringing forth the fruits of the ſpirit.

The attaining this real, inward religion, is a work of ſo great difficulty, that *Nicodemus*, a learned doctor and teacher in *Iſrael*, thought it altogether impoſſible, and therefore ignorantly aſked our bleſſed LORD, "How this thing could be?" And, *truly*, to rectify a diſordered nature, to mortify our corrupt paſſions, to turn darkneſs to light, to put off the old man, and put on the new, and thereby to have the image of GOD reinſtamped upon the ſoul, or, in one word, "to be born again," however light ſome may make of it, muſt, after all our endeavours, be owned by man to be impoſſible. It is true, indeed, CHRIST's yoke is ſaid to be an eaſy or a gracious yoke, and his burthen light; but then it is to thoſe only to whom grace has been given to bear and draw in it. For, as the wiſe ſon of *Sirach* obſerves, "At firſt wiſdom walked "with her children in crooked ways, and brings them into "fear; and torments them with her diſcipline, and does not "turn to comfort and rejoice them, 'till ſhe has tried them "and proved their judgment." No; we muſt not flatter ourſelves that we ſhall walk in wiſdom's pleaſant ways, unleſs we firſt ſubmit to a great many difficulties. The ſpiritual birth is attended with its pangs, as well as the natural: for they that have experienced it, (and they only are the proper judges,) can acquaint you, that in all things that are dear to corrupt

nature, we muſt deny ourſelves, leſt, after all, when we come to the birth, we ſhould want ſtrength to bring forth.

But if theſe things are ſo; if there are difficulties and pangs attending our being born again; if we muſt deny ourſelves, what ſeaſon more proper than that of youth? When, if ever, our bodies are robuſt and vigorous, and our minds active and couragious; and, conſequently, we are then beſt qualified to endure hardneſs, as good ſoldiers of JESUS CHRIST.

We find, in ſecular matters, people commonly obſerve this method, and ſend their children abroad among the toils and fatigues of buſineſs, in their younger years, as well knowing they are then fitteſt to undergo them. And why do they not act with the ſame conſiſtency in the grand affair of religion? Becauſe, as our Saviour has told us, "The children of this world are wiſer in their generation than the children of light."

But, *Secondly*, If pure and undefiled religion conſiſts in the renewal of our corrupted natures, then it is not only a work of difficulty, but, the perfection of it, of time.

And if this be the caſe, then it highly concerns every one to ſet about it betimes, and to "work their work while it is day, before the night cometh, when no man can work."

Could we, indeed, live to the age of *Methuſelah*, and had but little buſineſs to employ ourſelves in, we might then be more excuſable, if we made no other uſe of this world, than what too many do, take our paſtime therein: but ſince our lives are ſo very ſhort, and we are called to work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling, we have no room left for trifling, leſt we ſhould be ſnatched away while our lamps are untrimmed, and we are entirely unprepared to meet the Bridegroom.

Did we know a friend or neighbour, who had a long journey of the utmoſt importance to make, and yet ſhould ſtand all the day idle, neglecting to ſet out till the ſun was about to go down, we could not but pity and condemn his egregious folly. And yet it is to be feared moſt men are juſt ſuch fools; they have a long journey to take, nay, a journey to eternity, a journey of infinite importance, and which they are obliged to diſpatch before the ſun of their natural life be gone down;

wn; and yet they loiter away the time allotted them to perform their journey in, till ſickneſs or death ſurprizes them; nd then they cry out, "What ſhall we do to inherit eternal ife?" But leaving ſuch to the mercies of GOD in CHRIST, who can call at the eleventh hour, I paſs on to

The Second general thing propoſed, To ſhew the advantages that will ariſe from remembering our Creator in the days of our youth; which may ſerve as ſo many motives to excite and quicken all perſons immediately to ſet about it.

And the firſt benefit reſulting from thence is, that it will bring moſt honour and glory to GOD. This, I ſuppoſe, every ſerious perſon will grant, ought to be the point in which our actions ſhould centre; for to this end were we born, and to this end were we redeemed by the precious blood of JESUS CHRIST, that we ſhould promote GOD's eternal glory. And as the glory of GOD is moſt advanced by paying obedience to his precepts, they that begin ſooneſt to walk in his ways, act moſt to his glory. The common objection againſt the divine laws in general, and the doctrines of the goſpel in particular, is, that they are not practicable; that they are contrary to fleſh and blood; and that all thoſe precepts concerning ſelf-denial, renunciation of and deadneſs to the world, are but ſo many arbitrary reſtraints impoſed upon human nature: but when we ſee mere ſtriplings not only practiſing, but delighting in ſuch religious duties, and in the days of their youth, when, if ever, they have a reliſh for ſenſual pleaſures, ſubduing and deſpiſing the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life; this, this is pleaſing to GOD; this vindicates his injured honour; this ſhews that his ſervice is perfect freedom, "that his yoke is eaſy, and his burden light."

But, *Secondly*, as an early piety redounds moſt to the honour of GOD, ſo it will bring moſt honour to ourſelves: for thoſe that honour GOD, GOD will honour. We find it, therefore, remarked to the praiſe of *Obadiah*, that he ſerved the LORD from his youth: of *Samuel*, that he ſtood, when young, before GOD in a linen ephod: of *Timothy*, that from a child he had known the holy ſcriptures: of St. *John*, that he was the youngeſt and moſt beloved diſciple: and of our bleſſed LORD himſelf,

himſelf, that at twelve years old he went up to the temple, and ſat among the doctors, both hearing and aſking them queſtions.

Nor, *Thirdly*, will an early piety afford us leſs comfort than honour, not only becauſe it renders religion habitual to us, but alſo becauſe it gives us a well-grounded aſſurance of the ſincerity of our profeſſion. Was there no other argument againſt a death-bed repentance, but the unſatisfactorineſs and anxiety of ſuch a ſtate, that ſhould be ſufficient to deter all thinking perſons from deferring the moſt important buſineſs of their life to ſuch a dreadful period of it. For ſuppoſing a man to be ſincere in his profeſſion of repentance on a death-bed (which, in moſt caſes, is very much to be doubted) yet, he is often afraid leſt his convictions and remorſe proceed not from a true ſorrow for ſin, but a ſervile fear of puniſhment. But one, who is a young ſaint, need fear no ſuch perplexity; he knows that he loves GOD for his own ſake, and is not driven to him by a dread of impending evil; he does not decline the gratifications of ſenſe, becauſe he can no longer "hear the voice of ſinging men and ſinging women;" but willingly takes up his croſs, and follows his bleſſed Maſter in his youth, and therefore has reaſon to expect greater confidence of his ſincerity towards GOD. But farther, as an early piety aſſures the heart of its ſincerity, ſo, likewiſe, it brings its preſent reward with it, as it renders religion and all its duties habitual and eaſy. A young ſaint, was you to aſk him, would joyfully tell you the unſpeakable comfort of beginning to be religious betimes: as for his part, he knows not what men mean by talking of mortification, ſelf-denial, and retirement, as hard and rigorous duties; for he has ſo accuſtomed himſelf to them, that, by the grace of GOD, they are now become even natural, and he takes infinitely more pleaſure in practiſing the ſevereſt precepts of the goſpel, than a luxurious *Dives* in a bed of ſtate, or an ambitious *Haman* at a royal banquet. And O how happy muſt that youth be, whoſe duty is become a ſecond nature, and to whom thoſe things, which ſeem terrible to others, are grown both eaſy and delightful!

But the greateſt advantage of an early piety is ſtill behind, *Fourthly*, It lays in the beſt proviſion of comfort and ſupport

againſt

gainſt ſuch times as we ſhall ſtand moſt in need thereof, viz. all times of our tribulation, and in particular, againſt the time of old age, the hour of death, and the day of judgment.

This is the argument the wiſe man makes uſe of in the words immediately following the text: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, wherein thou ſhalt ſay, I have no pleaſure in them." Obſerve, the time of old age, is an evil time, years wherein there is no pleaſure: and aſk thoſe that are grown old, and they will inform you ſo. Cordials ſurely, then, muſt be exceeding proper to ſupport our drooping ſpirits: and O what cordial comparable to the recollection of early piety, depending wholly on the righteouſneſs of CHRIST? When the eyes, like *Iſaac*'s, are grown dim with age; when "the keepers of the houſe, the hands, ſhall tremble," as the wiſe man goes on to deſcribe the infirmities of old age; when "the ſtrong men bow themſelves," or the legs grow feeble; and the "grinders," the teeth, ſhall ceaſe to do their proper office, becauſe they are few; for a perſon then to hear the precepts of the goſpel read over to him, and to be able to lay his hand on his heart, and to ſay ſincerely, notwithſtanding a conſciouſneſs of numberleſs ſhort-comings, "All theſe have I endeavoured, through grace, to keep from my youth:" this muſt give him, through CHRIST who worketh all, comfort that I want words to expreſs and thoughts to conceive. But, ſuppoſing it was poſſible for us to eſcape the inconveniences of old age, yet ſtill death is a debt, ſince the fall, we all muſt pay; and, what is worſe, it generally comes attended with ſuch dreadful circumſtances, that it will make even a *Felix* to tremble. But as for the godly, that have been enabled to ſerve the LORD from their youth, it is not uſually ſo with them; no, they have faith given them to look upon death, not as a king of terrors, but as a welcome meſſenger, that is come to conduct them to their wiſhed-for home. All the days of their appointed time have they waited, and it has been the buſineſs of their whole lives to ſtudy to prepare themſelves for the coming of their great change; and, therefore, they rejoice to hear that they are called to meet the heavenly Bridegroom.

Thus dies the early pious, whoſe "path has been as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day." But follow him beyond the grave, and ſee with what an holy triumph he enters into his Maſter's joy; with what an humble boldneſs he ſtands at the dreadful tribunal of JESUS CHRIST; and can you then forbear to cry out, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end, and future ſtate, be like his?"

Need I then, after having ſhewn ſo many advantages to ariſe from an early piety, uſe any more arguments to perſuade the younger part of this audience, to whom, in the *Third* and laſt place, I addreſs myſelf, to "remember their Creator in the days of their youth?"

What! will not all the arguments I have mentioned, prevail with them to leave their huſks, and return home to eat of the fatted calf? What! will they thus requite our Saviour's love? That be far from them! Did he come down and ſhed his precious blood to deliver them from the power of ſin; and will they ſpend their youthful ſtrength and vigour in the ſervice of it, and then think to ſerve CHRIST, when they can follow their luſts no longer? Is it fit, that many, who are endowed with excellent gifts, and are thereby qualified to be ſupports and ornaments of our ſinking church, ſhould, notwithſtanding, forget the GOD who gave them, and employ them in things that will not profit? O why will they not ariſe, and, like ſo many *Phineas's*, be zealous for the Lord of Hoſts? Doubtleſs, when death overtakes them, they will wiſh they had: and what hinders them, but that they begin now? Think you that any one yet ever repented that he began to be religious too ſoon? But how many, on the contrary, have repented that they began when almoſt too late? May we not well imagine, that young *Samuel* now rejoices that he waited ſo ſoon at the tabernacle of the LORD? Or young *Timothy*, that from a child he knew the holy ſcriptures? And if you wiſh to be partakers of their joy, let me perſuade you to be partakers of their piety.

I could ſtill go on to fill my mouth with arguments; but the circumſtances and piety of thoſe amongſt whom I am now preaching "the kingdom of GOD," remind me to change my ſtyle; and, inſtead of urging any more diſſuaſives from ſin,

in, to fill up what is behind of this diſcourſe, with encouragements to perſevere in holineſs.

Bleſſed, for ever bleſſed be the GOD and the Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, I am not ſpeaking to perſons inflamed with youthful luſts, but to a multitude of young profeſſors, who by frequently aſſembling together, and forming themſelves into religious ſocieties, are, I hope on good ground, in a ready way to be of the number of thoſe "young men, who have overcome the wicked-one."

Believe me, it gladdens my very ſoul, to ſee ſo many of your faces ſet heaven-wards, and the viſible happy effects of your uniting together, cannot but rejoice the hearts of all ſincere chriſtians, and oblige them to wiſh you good luck in the name of the LORD. The many ſouls who are nouriſhed weekly with the ſpiritual body and blood of JESUS CHRIST, by your means; the weekly and monthly lectures that are preached by your contributions; the daily incenſe of thankſgiving and prayer which is publicly ſent up to the throne of grace by your ſubſcriptions; the many children which are trained up "in the nurture and admonition of the LORD," by your charities; and, laſtly, the commendable and pious zeal you exert in promoting and encouraging divine pſalmody, are ſuch plain and apparent proofs of the benefit of your religious ſocieties, that they call for a public acknowledgment of praiſe and thankſgiving to our bleſſed Maſter, who has not only put into your hearts ſuch good deſigns, but enabled you alſo to bring the ſame to good effect.

It is true it has been objected, "That young mens form-"ing themſelves into religious ſocieties, has a tendency to "make them ſpiritually proud, and to 'think more highly of "themſelves than they ought to think." And, perhaps, the imprudent, imperious behaviour of ſome novices in religion, who, "though they went out from you, were not of you," may have given too much occaſion for ſuch an aſperſion.

But you, brethren, have not ſo learned CHRIST. Far, far be it from you to look upon yourſelves, as righteous, and deſpiſe others, becauſe you often aſſemble yourſelves together. No; this, inſtead of creating pride, ought to beget an holy fear in your hearts, leſt your practice ſhould not correſpond with your profeſſion, and that, after you have benefited and edified others, you yourſelves ſhould become caſt-aways.

Worldly-mindedneſs, my brethren, is another rock againſt which we are in danger of ſplitting. For, if other ſins have ſlain their thouſands of profeſſing chriſtians, this has ſlain its ten thouſands. I need not appeal to paſt ages; your own experience, no doubt, has furniſhed you with many unhappy inſtances of young men, who, "after (as one would have imagined) they had eſcaped the pollutions which are in the world through luſt," and "had taſted the good word of life," and endured for a ſeaſon, whilſt under the tuition and inſpection of others: yet, when they have come to be their own maſters, through a want of faith, and through too great an earneſtneſs in "labouring for the meat which periſheth," have caſt off their firſt love, been again entangled with the world, and "returned like the dog to his vomit, and like the ſow that was waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire." You would, therefore, do well, my brethren, frequently to remind each other of this dangerous ſnare, and to exhort one another to begin, purſue, and end your chriſtian warfare, in a thorough renunciation of the world, and worldly tempers; ſo that, when you are obliged by Providence to provide for yourſelves, and thoſe of your reſpective houſholds, you may continue to walk by faith, and ſtill "ſeek firſt the kingdom of GOD, and his righteouſneſs;" not doubting, but all other things, upon your honeſt induſtry and endeavours, ſhall be added unto you.

And now, what ſhall I ſay more? To ſpeak unto you, fathers, who have been in CHRIST ſo many years before me, and know the malignity of worldly-mindedneſs, and pride in the ſpiritual life, would be altogether needleſs. To you, therefore, O young men, (for whom I am diſtreſſed, for whom I fear as well as for myſelf) do I once more addreſs myſelf, in the words of the beloved diſciple, "Look to yourſelves, that we loſe not thoſe things which we have wrought, but receive a full reward." Be ever mindful, then, of the words that have been ſpoken to us by the apoſtles of the LORD and Saviour. "Give diligence to make your calling and election ſure. Beware, leſt ye alſo being led away by the error of the wicked, fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs. Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall. Be not high-minded, but fear. But we are perſuaded better things of you, and things that accompany ſalvation, though we thus

ſpeak. For GOD is not unrighteous, to forget your works and labours of love. And we deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes." It is true, we have many difficulties to encounter, many powerful enemies to overcome, ere we can get poſſeſſion of the promiſed land. We have an artful devil, an enſnaring world, and above all, the treachery of our own hearts, to withſtand and ſtrive againſt. "For ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto eternal life." But wherefore ſhould we fear, ſince he that is with us is far more powerful, than all who are againſt us? Have we not already experienced his almighty power, in enabling us to conquer ſome difficulties which ſeemed as inſurmountable then, as thoſe we ſtruggle with now? And cannot he, who delivered us out of the paws of thoſe bears and lions, preſerve us alſo from being hurt by the ſtrongeſt *Goliah?*

"Be ſtedfaſt therefore, my brethren, be immoveable." Be not "aſhamed of the goſpel of CHRIST: for it is the power of GOD unto ſalvation." Fear not man; fear not the contempt and revilings which you muſt meet with in the way of duty; for one of you ſhall chaſe a thouſand; and two of you put ten thouſand of your enemies to flight. And if you will be contented, through grace, to ſuffer for a ſhort time here; I ſpeak the truth in CHRIST, I lye not; then may ye hope, according to the bleſſed word of promiſe, that ye ſhall be exalted to ſit down with the Son of Man, when he ſhall come in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels, to judgment hereafter. May Almighty GOD give every one of us ſuch a meaſure of his grace, that we may not be of the number of thoſe that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe and endure unto the end, to the ſaving of our ſouls, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Which GOD, &c.

SERMON

SERMON XII.

CHRIST the Believer's Husband.

ISAIAH liv. 5.

For thy Maker is thy Husband.

ALTHOUGH believers by nature, are far from GOD, and children of wrath, even as others, yet it is amazing think how nigh they are brought to him again by the blood JESUS CHRIST. Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither it entered into the heart of any man living, fully to ceive, the nearneſs and dearneſs of that relation, in which ſtand to their common head. He is not aſhamed to call brethren. Behold, ſays the bleſſed JESUS in the days is fleſh, "my mother and my brethren." And again after reſurrection, "go tell my brethren." Nay ſometimes he leaſed to term believers his *friends*. "Henceforth call I no longer ſervants, but friends." "Our friend *Lazarus* eth." And what is a friend? Why there is a friend that earer than a brother, nay, as near as one's own ſoul. And y friend, (ſays GOD in the book of *Deuteronomy*) which is y own ſoul." Kind and endearing appellations theſe, that oubtedly beſpeak a very near and ineffably intimate union veen the LORD JESUS and the true living members of his tical body! But, methinks, the words of our text point to us a relation, which not only comprehends, but in re- t to nearneſs and dearneſs, exceeds all other relations tſoever. I mean that of a *Huſband*. "For thy Maker is huſband; the LORD of Hoſts is his name; and thy Re- ner the Holy One of *Iſrael*, the GOD of the whole earth l he be called."

Theſe words were originally ſpoken to the people of the s, conſidered collectively as a peculiar people, whom our

LORD had betrothed and married to himſelf; and they ſeem to be ſpoken, when religion was on the decline among their churches; when they had, in a great meaſure, loſt that life and power, which they once experienced; and their enemies began to inſult them with a "where is now your GOD?" Such a ſtate of things muſt undoubtedly be very afflicting to the true mourners in *Zion*; and put them upon crying unto the LORD, in this their deep diſtreſs. He hears their prayer, his bowels yearn towards them; and in the preceding verſe, he aſſures them, that though the enemy had broken in upon them like a flood, yet their extremity ſhould be his opportunity to lift up a ſtandard againſt him. "Fear not, (ſays the great Head and King of his church) for thou ſhalt not be aſhamed (finally or totally); neither be thou confounded, (diſſipated or dejected, giving up all for gone, as though thou never ſhouldſt ſee better days, or another revival of religion) for thou ſhalt not (entirely) be put to ſhame;" though for a while, for thy humiliation, and the greater confuſion of thy adverſaries, I ſuffer them to triumph over thee: "For thou ſhalt forget the ſhame of thy youth, and ſhalt not remember the reproach of thy widow-hood any more;" *i. e.* I will vouchſafe you ſuch another glorious gale of my bleſſed Spirit, that you ſhall quite forget your former troubled widow-ſtate, and give your enemies no more occaſion to inſult you, on account of your infant-condition, but rather to envy you, and gnaſh their teeth, and melt away at the ſight of your unthought-of glory and proſperity. And why will the infinitely great and condeſcending JESUS deal thus with his people? Becauſe the church is his ſpouſe; "For, (as in the words juſt now read to you) thy Maker is thy huſband; thy Redeemer, the Holy One of *Iſrael*;" and therefore he loves thee too well, to let thy enemies always trample thee under foot. "The LORD of Hoſts is his name, the GOD of the whole earth ſhall he be called;" and therefore he is armed with ſufficient power to relieve his oppreſſed people, and overcome and avenge himſelf of all their haughty and inſulting foes.

This ſeems to be the prime and genuine interpretation of the text and context, eſpecially if we add, that they may have a further view to the latter-day glory, and that bleſſed ſtate of the church, which the people of GOD have been looking for

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in all ages, and the ſpeedy approach of which, we undoubtedly pray for, when we put up that petition of our LORD's, "thy kingdom come."

But, though the words were originally ſpoken to the *Jews*, yet they are undoubtedly applicable to all believers in all ages, and, when inlarged on in a proper manner, will afford us ſuitable matter of diſcourſe both for ſinners and for ſaints; for ſuch as know GOD, as well as for ſuch who know him not; and likewiſe for thoſe, who once walked in the light of his bleſſed countenance, but are now backſlidden from him, have their harps hung upon the willows, and are afraid that their beloved is gone, and will return to their ſouls no more. Accordingly, without prefacing this diſcourſe any farther, as I ſuppoſe that a mixed multitude of ſaints, unconverted ſinners, and backſliders, are preſent here this day, I ſhall endeavour ſo to ſpeak from the words of the text, that each may have a proper portion, and none be ſent empty away.

In proſecuting this deſign, I will,

I. Endeavour to ſhew, what muſt paſs between JESUS CHRIST and our ſouls before we can ſay, "that our Maker is our huſband."

II. The duties of love which they owe to our LORD, who ſtand in ſo near a relation to him.

III. The miſerable condition of ſuch as cannot yet ſay, "their Maker is their huſband." And

IV. I ſhall conclude with a general exhortation to all ſuch unhappy ſouls, to come and match with the dear LORD JESUS. And O! may that GOD who bleſſed *Abraham's* ſervant, when he went out to ſeek a wife for his ſon *Iſaac*, bleſs me, even me alſo, now I am come, I truſt, relying on divine ſtrength, to invite poor ſinners, and recal backſliders, to my Maſter JESUS!

And *Firſt*, I am to ſhew, what muſt paſs between JESUS CHRIST and our ſouls before we can ſay, "Our Maker is our huſband."

But before I proceed to this, it may not be improper to obſerve, that if any of you, amongſt whom I am now preaching the

the kingdom of GOD, are enemies to inward religion, and explode the doctrine of inward feelings, as enthuſiaſm, cant and nonſenſe, I ſhall not be ſurprized, if your hearts riſe againſt me whilſt I am preaching; for I am about to diſcourſe on true, vital, internal piety; and an inſpired apoſtle hath told us, "that the natural man diſcerneth not the things of the ſpirit, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned." But, however, be noble as the *Bereans* were; ſearch the Scriptures as they did; lay aſide prejudice; hear like *Nathaniel*, with a true *Iſraelitiſh* ear; be willing to do the will of GOD; and then you ſhall, according to the promiſe of our deareſt LORD, "know of the doctrine, whether it be of GOD, or whether I ſpeak of myſelf."

I would further obſerve, that if any here do expect fine preaching from me this day, they will, in all probability, go away diſappointed. For I came not here to ſhoot over people's heads; but, if the LORD ſhall be pleaſed to bleſs me, to reach their hearts. Accordingly, I ſhall endeavour to cloath my ideas in ſuch plain language, that the meaneſt negro or ſervant, if GOD is pleaſed to give a hearing ear, may underſtand me; for I am certain, if the poor and unlearned can comprehend, the learned and rich muſt.

This being premiſed, proceed we to ſhew what muſt paſs between JESUS CHRIST and our ſouls, before we can ſay, "our Maker is our huſband."

Now, that we may diſcourſe more pertinently and intelligibly upon this point, it may not be amiſs to conſider, what is neceſſary to be done, before a marriage between two parties amongſt ourſelves, can be ſaid to be valid in the ſight of GOD and man. And that will lead us in a familiar way, to ſhew what muſt be done, or what muſt paſs between us and JESUS CHRIST, before we can ſay, "our Maker is our huſband."

And *Firſt*, In all lawful marriages, it is abſolutely neceſſary, that the parties to be joined together in that holy and honourable eſtate, are actually and legally freed from all pre-engagements whatſoever. "A woman is bound to her huſband, (ſaith the apoſtle) ſo long as her huſband liveth." The ſame law holds good in reſpect to the man. And ſo likewiſe, if either party be betrothed and promiſed, though not actually married to another, the marriage is not lawful, till that pre-engagement and promiſe be fairly and mutually diſſolved.

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Now, it is juſt thus between us and the LORD JESUS. For, we are all by nature born under, and wedded to the law, as a covenant of works. Hence it is that we are ſo fond of, and artfully go about, in order to eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of our own. It is as natural for us to do this, as it is to breathe. Our firſt parents, *Adam* and *Eve*, even after the covenant of grace was revealed to them in that promiſe, "the ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head," reached out their hands, and would again have taken hold of the tree of life, which they had forfeited, had not GOD drove them out of paradiſe, and compelled them, as it were, to be ſaved by grace. And thus all their deſcendants naturally run to, and want to be ſaved, partly at leaſt, if not wholly, by their works. And even gracious ſouls, who are inwardly renewed, ſo far as the old man abides in them, find a ſtrong propenſity this way. Hence it is, that natural men are generally ſo fond of *Arminian* principles. "Do and live," is the native language of a proud, ſelf-righteous heart. But before we can ſay, "our Maker is our huſband," we muſt be divorced from our old huſband the law; we muſt renounce our own righteouſneſs, our own doings and performances, in point of dependence, whether in whole or part, as dung and droſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS our LORD. For, thus ſpeaks the apoſtle *Paul* to the *Romans*, chap. vii. 4. "Ye alſo are become dead to the law (as a covenant of works) by the body of CHRIST, that ye ſhould be married to another, even to him, who is raiſed from the dead." As he alſo ſpeaketh in another place, "I have eſpouſed you, as a chaſte virgin to JESUS CHRIST." This was the apoſtle's own caſe. Whilſt he depended on his being a *Hebrew* of the *Hebrews*, and thought himſelf ſecure, becauſe, as to the outward obſervation of the law, he was blameleſs; he was an entire ſtranger to the divine life: but when he began to experience the power of JESUS CHRIST's reſurrection, we find him, in his epiſtle to the *Philippians*, abſolutely renouncing all his external privileges, and all his phariſaical righteouſneſs; "Yea, doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs, nay but dung, that I may win CHRIST, and be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of JESUS CHRIST, the righteouſneſs which is of GOD by faith." And thus it muſt be

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with us, ere we can ſay, "our Maker is our huſband." Though we may not be wrought upon in that extraordinary way in which the apoſtle was, yet we muſt be dead to the law, we muſt be eſpouſed as chaſte virgins to JESUS CHRIST, and count all external privileges, and our moſt ſplendid performances (as was before obſerved) only "as dung and droſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of JESUS CHRIST our LORD."

But further; before a marriage among us can ſtand good in law, both parties muſt not only be freed from all pre-engagements, but there muſt be a mutual conſent on both ſides. We are not uſed to marry people againſt their wills. This is what the *Jews* called betrothing, or eſpouſing, a thing previous to the ſolemnity of marriage. Thus we find, the Virgin *Mary* is ſaid to be eſpouſed to *Joſeph*, before they actually came together, *Mat.* i. 18. And thus it is among us. Both parties are previouſly agreed, and, as it were, eſpouſed to each other, before we publiſh, what we call the banns of marriage concerning them. And ſo it will be in the ſpiritual marriage, between JESUS CHRIST and our ſouls. Before we are actually married or united to him by faith; or, to keep to the terms of the text, before we aſſuredly can ſay, that "our Maker is our huſband," we muſt be made willing people in the day of GOD's power, we muſt be ſweetly and effectually perſuaded by the Holy Spirit of GOD, that the glorious *Emmanuel* is willing to accept of us, juſt as we are, and alſo that we are willing to accept of him upon his own terms, yea, upon any terms. And when once it comes to this, the ſpiritual marriage goes on apace, and there is but one thing lacking to make it compleat. And what is that? An actual union.

This is abſolutely neceſſary in every lawful marriage among men. There muſt be a joining of hands before witneſſes, ere they can be deemed lawfully joined together. Some men indeed of corrupt minds, are apt to look upon this as a needleſs ceremony, and think it ſufficient to be married, as they term it, in the ſight of GOD. But whence men get ſuch divinity, I know not. I am poſitive, not from the Bible; for we there read that even at the firſt marriage in paradiſe, there was ſomething of outward ſolemnity; GOD himſelf (if I may ſo ſpeak) being there the prieſt. For we are told, *Gen.* ii. 22. that

after

fter GOD had made the woman, "he brought her unto the nan." And indeed, to lay aſide all manner of outward ceremony in marriage, would be to turn the world into a den of brute beaſts. Men would then take, or forſake as many wives as they pleaſed, and we ſhould ſoon ſink into as bad and brutal a ſtate, as thoſe nations are, amongſt whom ſuch practices are allowed of, and who are utterly deſtitute of the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. Whoever has experienced the power of his reſurrection, I am perſuaded will never plead for ſuch a licentious practice. For the terms made uſe of in Scripture, to repreſent the myſtical union between CHRIST and his church, ſuch as, our being "joined to the LORD," and "married to JESUS CHRIST," are all metaphorical expreſſions, taken from ſome analogous practices amongſt men. And as perſons when married, though before twain, are now one fleſh; ſo thoſe that are joined to the LORD, and can truly ſay, "our Maker is our huſband," are in the apoſtle's language, one ſpirit.' This was typified in the original marriage of our firſt parents. When GOD brought *Eve* to *Adam*, he received her with joy at his hands, and ſaid, "this is bone of my bone, and fleſh of my fleſh." They had there, primarily, but one name. For thus ſpeaks the ſacred Hiſtorian, *Gen.* v. 1, 2. "In the day that GOD created man, he bleſſed them, and called their name *Adam*." And why? becauſe they were one fleſh, and were to have but one heart. The ſelf-ſame terms are made uſe of in Scripture, to expreſs the believer's union with JESUS CHRIST. We are called Chriſtians, after CHRIST's name, becauſe made partakers of CHRIST's nature. Out of his fulneſs, believers receive grace for grace. And therefore, the marriage ſtate, eſpecially by the apoſtle *Paul*, is frequently made uſe of, to figure out to us the real, vital union, between JESUS CHRIST and regenerate ſouls. This is termed by the apoſtle, *Eph.* v. 32. "A great myſtery." But great as it is, we muſt all experience it, before we can ſay aſſuredly, that "our Maker is our huſband." For what ſays our LORD, in that prayer he put up to his Father before his bitter paſſion? "Father, I will that thoſe whom thou haſt given me, ſhall be where I am, that they may be one with thee; even as thou, O Father, and I are one, I in them, and they in me, that we all may be made perfect in one." O

infinite condeſcenſion! O ineffable union! Hence it is, that believers are ſaid to be members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones. Hence it is, that the apoſtle ſpeaking of himſelf, ſays, "I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me." What an expreſſion is that? How much does it comprehend? And, that we might not think this was ſomething peculiar to himſelf, he puts this cloſe queſtion to the *Corinthians*; "Know ye not, that CHRIST is in you, unleſs you be reprobates?" Agreeable to what he ſays in his epiſtle to the *Coloſſians*, "CHRIST in you, the hope of glory." And hence it is, that our church, in the communion-office, directs the miniſter to acquaint all thoſe who receive the ſacrament worthily, that they are one with CHRIST, and CHRIST with them; that they dwell in CHRIST, and CHRIST in them. Words that deſerve to be written in letters of gold, and which evidently ſhew, what our reformers believed all perſons muſt experience, before they could truly and aſſuredly ſay, that "their Maker is their huſband."

From what has been delivered, may not the pooreſt and moſt illiterate perſon here preſent eaſily know whether or not he is really married to JESUS CHRIST. Some indeed, I am afraid, are ſo preſumptuous as to affirm, at leaſt to inſinuate, that there is no ſuch thing as knowing, or being fully aſſured, whilſt here below, whether we are in CHRIST or not. Or at leaſt, if there be ſuch a thing, it is very rare, or was only the privilege of the primitive believers. Part of this is true, and part of this abſolutely falſe. That this glorious privilege of a full aſſurance is very rare, is too, too true. And ſo it is equally too true, that real chriſtians, comparatively ſpeaking, are very rare alſo. But that there is no ſuch thing, or that this was only the privilege of the firſt followers of our bleſſed LORD, is directly oppoſite to the word of GOD. "We know (ſays St. *John*, ſpeaking of believers in general) that we are his, by the ſpirit which he hath given us;" and, "He that believeth hath the witneſs in himſelf;" "becauſe you are ſons (ſaith St. *Paul*) GOD hath ſent forth his Spirit into your hearts, even the ſpirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Not that I dare affirm, that there is no real chriſtian, but what has this full aſſurance of faith, and clearly knows, that his Maker is his huſband. In ſpeaking thus, I ſhould undoubtedly condemn ſome of the generation of GOD's dear children,

children, who through the prevalence of unbelief, indwelling ſin, ſpiritual ſloth, or it may be, for want of being informed of the privileges of believers, may walk in darkneſs, and ſee no light; therefore, though I dare not affirm, that a full aſſurance of faith is abſolutely neceſſary for the very being, yet I dare aſſert, that it is abſolutely neceſſary, for the well being of a chriſtian. And for my own part, I cannot conceive, how any perſons, that pretend to chriſtianity, can reſt ſatisfied or contented without it. This is ſtopping ſhort, on this ſide *Jordan*, with a witneſs. And gives others too much reaſon to ſuſpect, that ſuch perſons, however high their profeſſion may be, have, as yet, no true ſaving grace at all.

Men, whoſe hearts are ſet on this world's goods, or, to uſe our LORD's language, "the children of this world," act not ſo. I ſuppoſe there is ſcarce a ſingle merchant in this great congregation, eſpecially in theſe troublous times, that will venture out either his ſhip or cargo, without firſt inſuring, both againſt the violence of an enemy, or a ſtorm. And I ſuppoſe there is ſcarce a ſingle houſe, of any conſiderable value, in any populous town or city, but the owner has taken out a policy from the fire-office, to inſure it, in caſe of fire. And can I be ſo irrational as to think, that there is ſuch a thing as ſecuring my goods, and my houſe, and that there is no ſuch thing as inſuring, what is infinitely more valuable, my precious and immortal ſoul? Or if there be ſuch a thing, as undoubtedly there is, what fooliſhneſs of folly muſt it needs be in men, that pretend to be men of parts, of good ſenſe, and ſolid reaſoning, to be ſo anxious to ſecure their ſhips againſt a ſtorm, and their houſes againſt a fire, and at the ſame time, not to be unſpeakably more ſolicitous, to take a policy out of the aſſurance-office of heaven; even the ſeal and witneſs of the bleſſed Spirit of GOD, to inſure their ſouls againſt that ſtorm of divine wrath, and that vengeance of eternal fire, which will at the laſt deciſive day come upon all thoſe, who know not GOD, and have not obeyed his gracious goſpel? To affirm therefore, that there is no ſuch thing as knowing, that "our Maker is our huſband;" or that it was a privilege peculiar to the firſt chriſtians, to ſpeak in the mildeſt terms, is both irrational and unſcriptural. Not that all who can ſay, their Maker is their huſband, can give the ſame clear and diſtinct account of the time, manner and means

of their being ſpiritually united and married by faith, to the bleſſed bridegroom of the church. Some there may be now, as well as formerly, ſanctified from the womb. And others in their infancy and non-age, as it were ſilently converted. Such perhaps may ſay, with a little *Scotch* maiden, now with GOD, when I aſked her, whether JESUS CHRIST had taken away her old heart, and given her a new one? "Sir, it may "be, (ſaid ſhe,) I cannot directly tell you the time and place, "but this I know, it is done." And indeed it is not ſo very material, though no doubt it is very ſatisfactory, if we cannot relate all the minute and particular circumſtances, that attended our converſion; if ſo be we are truly converted now, and can ſay, the work is done, and that, "our Maker is our huſband." And I queſtion, whether there is one ſingle adult believer, now on earth, who lived before converſion, either in a courſe of ſecret or open ſin, but can, in a good degree, give an account of the beginning and progreſs of the work of grace in his heart.

What think ye? Need I tell any married perſons in this congregation, that they muſt go to the univerſity, and learn the languages, before they can tell whether they are married or not? Or, if their marriage was to be doubted, could they not, think you, bring their certificates, to certify the time and place of their marriage; and the miniſter that joined them together in that holy ſtate? And if you are adult, and are indeed married to JESUS CHRIST, though you may be unlearned, and what the world terms illiterate men, cannot you tell me the riſe and progreſs, and conſummation of the ſpiritual marriage, between JESUS CHRIST and your ſouls? Know you not the time, when you were firſt under the drawings of the Father, and JESUS began to woo you for himſelf? Tell me, O man, tell me, O woman, knoweſt thou not the time, or at leaſt, knoweſt thou not, that there was a time, when the bleſſed Spirit of GOD ſtripped thee of the fig-leaves of thy own righteouſneſs, hunted thee out of the trees of the garden of thy performances, forced thee from the embraces of thy old huſband the law, and made thee to abhor thy own righteouſneſs, as ſo many filthy rags? Canſt thou not remember, when, after a long ſtruggle with unbelief, JESUS appeared to thee, as altogether lovely, mighty and willing

ing to ſave? And canſt thou not reflect upon a ſeaſon, when thy own ſtubborn heart was made to bend; and thou waſt made willing to embrace him, as freely offered to thee in the everlaſting goſpel? And canſt thou not, with pleaſure unſpeakable, reflect on ſome happy period, ſome certain point of time, in which a ſacred ſomething (perhaps thou couldſt not then well tell what) did captivate, and fill thy heart, ſo that thou could ſay, in a rapture of holy ſurprize, and extacy of divine love, "My LORD and my GOD! my beloved is mine, and I am his; I know that my Redeemer liveth;" or, to keep to the words of our text, "My Maker is my huſband." Surely, amidſt this great and ſolemn aſſembly, there are many that can anſwer theſe queſtions in the affirmative. For theſe are tranſactions, not eaſily to be forgotten; and the day of our eſpouſals is, generally, a very remarkable day; a day to be had in everlaſting remembrance.

And can any of you indeed, upon good grounds ſay, that your Maker is your huſband? May I not then (as it is cuſtomary to wiſh perſons joy who are juſt entered into the marriage ſtate) congratulate you upon your happy change, and wiſh you joy, with all my heart? Sure am I that there was joy in heaven on the day of your eſpouſals: and why ſhould not the bleſſed news occaſion joy on earth? May I not addreſs you in the language of our LORD to the women that came to viſit his ſepulchre, "All hail!" for ye are highly favoured. Bleſſed are ye among men, bleſſed are ye among women! All generations ſhall call you bleſſed. What! "is your Maker your huſband? the holy one of *Iſrael* your Redeemer?" Sing, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth! What an amazing ſtoop is this! What a new thing has GOD created on the earth! Do not your hearts, O believers, burn within you, when meditating on this unſpeakable condeſcenſion of the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity? Whilſt you are muſing, does not the ſacred fire of divine love kindle in your ſouls? And, out of the abundance of your hearts, do you not often ſpeak with your tongues, and call upon all that is within you, to laud and magnify your Redeemer's holy name? Is not that GOD-exalting, ſelf-abaſing expreſſion frequently in your mouths, "Why me, LORD, why me?" And are you not often conſtrained to break out into that devout exclamation of *Solomon*,

when the glory of the LORD filled the temple, "And will GOD indeed dwell with man?" ungrateful, rebellious, ill, and hell-deſerving man! O, my brethren, my heart is enlarged towards you! Tears, while I am ſpeaking, are ready to guſh out. But they are tears of love and joy. How ſhall I give it vent? How ſhall I ſet forth thy happineſs, O believer, thou bride of GOD! And is thy Maker thy huſband? Is his name "The LORD of hoſts?" Whom then ſhouldſt thou fear? And is thy Redeemer the holy one of *Iſrael?* the GOD of the whole earth ſhould he be called! of whom then ſhouldſt thou be afraid? He that toucheth thee, toucheth the very apple of GOD's eye. "The very hairs of thy head are all numbered;" and "it is better that a man ſhould have a milſtone tied round his neck, and be drowned in the ſea, than that he ſhould juſtly offend thee."

All hail, (I muſt again repeat it) thou Lamb's bride! For thou art all glorious within, and comely, through the comelineſs thy heavenly bridegroom hath put upon thee. Thy garment is indeed of wrought gold; and, ere long, the King ſhall bring thee forth with a raiment of needle-work, and preſent thee blameleſs before his Father, without ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing. In the mean while, well ſhall it be with you, and happy ſhall you be, who are married to JESUS CHRIST: for all that CHRIST has, is yours. "He is made of GOD to you, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and eternal redemption." "Whether *Paul*, or *Cephas*, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come; all are yours." All his attributes are engaged for your preſervation, and all things ſhall work together for your good, who love GOD, and, by being thus married to the LORD JESUS, give an evident proof that you are called according to his purpoſe. What ſay you? When you meditate on theſe things, are you not frequently ready to cry out, What ſhall we render unto the LORD for all theſe mercies, which, of his free unmerited grace, he hath been pleaſed to beſtow upon us? For, though you are dead to the law, as a covenant of works, yet you are alive to the law as a rule of life, and are in, or under the law (for either expreſſion ſeems to denote the ſame thing) to your glorious huſband, JESUS CHRIST.

Paſs

Paſs we on therefore to the

Second general head, under which I was to ſhew, what duties of love they owe to JESUS CHRIST, who are ſo happy as to be able to ſay, "My Maker is my huſband."

I ſay, duties of love. For being now married to JESUS CHRIST, you work not for life, but from life. The love of GOD conſtrains you, ſo that, if there was no written law, or ſuppoſing JESUS would ſet you at liberty from his yoke, ſo far as grace prevails in your hearts, you would ſay, we love our bleſſed bridegroom, and will not go from him.

And what does the LORD require of you? That we may ſpeak on this head as plainly as may be, we ſhall purſue the method we begun with; and, by carrying on the allegory, and examining what is required of truly chriſtian wives, under the goſpel, infer what our LORD may juſtly demand of thoſe who are united to him by faith, and can therefore ſay, "our Maker is our huſband."

And here let us go to the law and to the teſtimony. What ſays the ſcripture? "Let the wife ſee that ſhe *reverence* her "huſband." It is, no doubt, the duty of married women to think highly of their huſbands. From whom may huſbands juſtly command reſpect, if not from their wives? The apoſtle's expreſſion is emphatical. "Let the wife ſee that ſhe reverence her huſband;" thereby implying, that women, ſome of them at leaſt, are too prone to diſreſpect their huſbands; as *Michal*, *Saul*'s daughter, deſpiſed *David* in her heart, when ſhe tauntingly ſaid, 2 *Sam.* vi. 20. "How glorious was the king of *Iſrael* to-day, who uncovered himſelf to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his ſervants, as one of the vain fellows ſhamleſly uncovereth himſelf."

This is a ſource and fountain, from whence many domeſtic evils frequently flow. Women ſhould remember the character that huſbands ſuſtain in ſcripture. They are to them, what CHRIST is to the church. And it is mentioned to the honour of *Sarah*, that ſhe called *Abraham* "Lord." "Shall I have a child who am old, *my Lord* being old alſo?" It is remarkable, there are but two good words in that whole ſentence, "my Lord," (for all the others are the language of unbelief) and yet thoſe two words the Holy Ghoſt mentions to her

eternal honour, and buries, as it were, the reſt in oblivion. "Even as *Sarah* (ſays St. *Peter*) obeyed *Abraham*, calling him Lord." An evident proof how pleaſing it is in the ſight of GOD, for women in the married ſtate to reverence and reſpect their huſbands. Not that huſbands therefore ſhould lord it over their wives, or require too much reſpect at their hands. This would be unchriſtian, as well as ungenerous, indeed. They ought rather, as GOD has taken ſuch care to keep up their authority, commanding their wives to reverence and reſpect them; they ought, I ſay, to be doubly careful, that they live ſo holy and unblameable, as to lay their wives under no temptation to deſpiſe them. But to return from this digreſſion. Does the apoſtle ſay, "Let the wife ſee that ſhe reverence her huſband?" May I not pertinently apply this caution to you who are married to JESUS CHRIST? See to it that you reverence and reſpect your huſband. I ſay, *ſee to it*. For the devil will be often ſuggeſting to you hard and mean thoughts againſt your huſband. It was thus he beſet our mother *Eve*, even in a ſtate of innocence. He would fain perſuade her to entertain hard thoughts of her glorious benefactor. "What, has GOD ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of the trees of the garden?" Has he been ſo cruel to put you here in a beautiful garden only to vex and teize you? This he made uſe of as an inlet to all his ſucceeding inſinuations. And this trade he is ſtill purſuing, and will be purſuing to the very end of time. Beſides, in the eyes of the world, JESUS CHRIST has no form or comelineſs that they ſhould deſire him; and therefore, unleſs you "watch and pray," you will be led into temptation, and not keep up ſuch high thoughts of your bleſſed JESUS as he juſtly deſerves. In this you can never exceed. Women, perhaps, may ſometimes think too highly of, and, through exceſs of love, idolize their earthly comforts. But it is impoſſible for you to think too highly of your heavenly huſband, JESUS CHRIST.

Farther, what ſays the apoſtle in his epiſtle to the *Epheſians?* Speaking of the marriage ſtate, he ſays, "The wife is the *glory* of her huſband;" as though he had ſaid, a chriſtian wife ſhould ſo behave, and ſo walk, as to be a credit to her huſband. As *Abigail* was an honour to *Nabal*, and by her ſweet deportment made up, in ſome degree, for her huſband's

band's churliſhneſs. This is to be a help-meet indeed. Such a woman will be praiſed in the gate; and her huſband get glory, and meet with reſpect on her account. And ought a woman to be the glory of her huſband? How much more ought you, that are the Lamb's bride, ſo to live, and ſo to walk, as to bring glory, and gain reſpect, to the cauſe and intereſt of your huſband JESUS? This is what the apoſtle every where ſuppoſes, when he would draw a parallel between a temporal and ſpiritual marriage. "The woman, is the glory of her huſband, even as the church is the glory of CHRIST." Agreeable to this, he tells the *Corinthians*, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatſoever you do, do all to the glory of GOD;" and as he alſo ſpeaks to the *Theſſalonians*, 1 *Theſſ.* ii. 11, 12. "As you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you (as a father doth his children) that you would walk worthy of GOD who hath called you to his kingdom, and his glory." What an expreſſion is here! "That you would walk worthy of GOD." O! how ought this, and ſuch like texts, to ſtir up your pure minds, O believers, ſo to have your converſation in this world, that you may be what the apoſtle ſays ſome particular perſons were, even "the glory of CHRIST." You are his glory; he rejoices over you with ſinging; and you ſhould ſo walk, that all who know and hear of you, may glorify CHRIST in you.

Subjection, is another duty, that is enjoined married women, in the word of GOD. They are to "be ſubject to their own huſbands in every thing," every lawful thing: "For, the huſband is the head of the wife, even as CHRIST is the head of the church." And knowing how unapt ſome baſe minds would be to ſubmit to the huſband's authority, he takes care to enforce this duty of ſubjection by many cogent and powerful arguments." "For *Adam* was firſt made, and not *Eve*. Neither was the man made for the woman, but the woman for the man." And again, "The man was not firſt in the tranſgreſſion, but the woman." Upon which accounts, ſubjection was impoſed on her as part of her puniſhment. "Thy deſire (ſays GOD) ſhall be to thy huſband, and he ſhall rule (though not tyrannize) over thee." So that, to uſe the words of pious Mr. *Henry*, thoſe who attempt to uſurp authority over their huſbands,

bands, not only contradict a divine command, but thwart a divine curſe. And if women are to be ſubject to their own huſbands in every thing, how much more ought believers, whether men or women, to be ſubject to JESUS CHRIST; for he is the head of the church. He has bought her by his blood. Believers therefore are not their own, but are under the higheſt obligations to glorify and obey JESUS CHRIST, in their bodies and their ſouls, which are his. Add to this, that his ſervice, as it is admirably expreſſed in one of our collects, is perfect freedom. His commandments holy, juſt, and good. And therefore it is your higheſt privilege, O believers, to ſubmit to, and obey them. Earthly huſbands may be ſo mean as to impoſe ſome things upon their wives, merely to ſhew their authority; but it is not ſo with JESUS CHRIST. He can and does impoſe nothing, but what immediately conduces to our preſent, as well as future good. In doing, nay, in ſuffering for JESUS CHRIST, there is a preſent unſpeakable reward. And therefore I may ſay to believers, as the bleſſed Virgin ſaid to the ſervants at the marriage in *Cana*, "Whatſoever he ſays unto you, do it." "For his yoke is eaſy, and his burden is light." And I believe it might eaſily be proved in a few minutes, that all the diſorders which are now in the world, whether in church or ſtate, are owing to a want of being univerſally, unanimouſly, chearfully, and perſeveringly conformed to the laws and example of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

Again, *Faithfulneſs* in the marriage ſtate, is ſtrictly enjoined in the ſcriptures of truth. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled. But whoremongers and adulterers GOD will judge." Nay, adultery is an iniquity to be puniſhed by the earthly judges; it diſſolves the marriage relation. "For the man has not power over his own body, but the woman; neither has the woman power over her own body, but the man." The heathens themſelves have been taught this by the light of nature; and adultery, among ſome of them, is puniſhed with immediate death. And ought married perſons to be thus careful to keep the marriage-bed undefiled, how carefully then ought believers to keep their ſouls chaſte, pure, and undefiled, now they are eſpouſed to JESUS CHRIST? For there is ſuch a thing as ſpiritual adultery;

"O

" O ye adulterers and adultereſſes," ſaith St. *James*. And GOD frequently complains of his people's playing the harlot. Hence it is, that St. *John*, in the moſt endearing manner, exhorts believers to " keep themſelves from idols." For the luſt of the eye, the luſt of the fleſh, and pride of life, are always ready to ſteal away our hearts from JESUS CHRIST. And every time we place our affections upon any thing more than CHRIST, we do undoubtedly commit ſpiritual adultery. For we admit a creature to rival the Creator, who is GOD over all, bleſſed for evermore. " Little children, therefore, keep yourſelves from idols."

But it is time for me to draw towards the cloſe of this head. *Fruitfulneſs* was a bleſſing promiſed by GOD to the firſt happy pair; " Increaſe and multiply, and repleniſh the earth." " Lo, children, and the fruit of the womb, (ſays the Pſalmiſt) are a gift and heritage, which cometh of the LORD." And ſo, if we are married to JESUS CHRIST, we muſt be fruitful. In what? In every good word and work: for thus ſpeaks the Apoſtle, in his epiſtle to the *Romans:* " Wherefore, my brethren, ye alſo are become dead to the law, by the body of CHRIST, that ye ſhould be married to another, even to him who is raiſed from the dead." What follows? " That we ſhould bring forth fruit unto GOD." Glorious words, and proper to be conſidered in a peculiar manner, by ſuch who would explode the doctrine of free juſtification, as an *Antinomian* doctrine, and as though it deſtroyed good works. No; it eſtabliſhes, and lays a ſolid foundation, whereon to build the ſuperſtructure of good works. *Titus* is therefore commanded to " exhort believers to be careful to maintain good works." And " herein (ſays our LORD) is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit. Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;" with a multitude of paſſages to the ſame purpoſe.

Moreover, it is required of wives, that they not only love and reverence their huſbands, but that they alſo love and reſpect their *huſband's friends*. And if we are married to JESUS CHRIST, we ſhall not only reverence the bridegroom, but we ſhall alſo love and honour the bridegroom's friends. " By this, ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye love

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one another." "By this we know, (ſays the beloved diſciple) that we have paſſed from death to life, becauſe we love the brethren." Obſerve, *the brethren*, indefinitely, of whatever denomination. And this love muſt be "without diſſimulation, and with a pure heart fervently." This was the caſe of the primitive chriſtians. They were all of one heart, and of one mind. It was ſaid of them (O that it could be ſaid of us!) "See how theſe chriſtians love one another!" They were of the ſame ſpirit as a good woman of *Scotland* was, who, when ſhe ſaw a great multitude, as is cuſtomary in that country, coming from various parts to receive the bleſſed ſacrament, ſaluted them with a "Come in, ye bleſſed of the "LORD, I have an houſe that will hold an hundred of you, "and a heart that will hold ten thouſand." Let us go and do likewiſe.

Once more. Perſons that are married, take one another *for better* or *for worſe*, for richer or for poorer, to love and to cheriſh each other in ſickneſs and in health. And if we are married to JESUS CHRIST, we ſhall be willing to bear his *croſs*, as well as to wear his *crown*. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, take up his croſs, and follow me." Neither will they be compelled to do this, as *Simon* of *Cyrene* was, but they will be volunteers in his ſervice; they will cry out, Crown him, crown him, when others are crying out, "Crucify him, crucify him." They will never leave or forſake him, but willingly follow the Captain of their ſalvation, though it be through a ſea of blood.

I might run the parallel ſtill further, and alſo enlarge upon the hints already given; but I fear I have ſaid enough already to reproach moſt believers; I am ſure I have ſaid more than enough to abaſh and upbraid myſelf. For alas! how vilely, treacherouſly, and ungratefully have we behaved towards our ſpiritual huſband, the dear LORD JESUS, ever ſince the day of our eſpouſals? Had our friends, or even the wives of our own boſoms, behaved to us as we have behaved to our great and beſt friend, our glorious huſband, we ſhould have broken off our friendſhip, and ſued for a bill of divorcement long ago. Under our firſt love, what promiſes did we make to him? But how frowardly have we behaved ourſelves in this covenant? How little have we reverenced him? How often has

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our Beloved been no more to us than another beloved? How ittle have we lived to his glory? Have we not been a ſhame and reproach to his goſpel? Have we not crucified him afreſh, and has he not been ſorely wounded in the houſe of his friends? Nay, has not his holy name been blaſphemed hrough our means? For alas! how little have we obeyed him? How careleſs and indifferent have we been, whether we pleaſed him or not? We have often ſaid, indeed, when commanded by him to go work in his vineyard, We go, LORD; but alas! we went not. Or if we did go, with what reluctance has it been? How unwilling to watch with our dear Lord and Maſter, only one hour? And of his ſabbaths, how often have we ſaid, What a wearineſs is this? As for our adulteries, and ſpiritual fornications, how frequent, how aggravated have they been? Have not idols of all ſorts, been ſuffered to fill up the room of the ever-bleſſed JESUS in our hearts? You that love him in ſincerity, will not be offended if I tell you, that the xvith chapter of *Ezekiel* gives, in my opinion, a lively deſcription of our behaviour towards our LORD. We were, like baſe-born children, caſt out in the field to the loathing of our perſons: no eye pitied or had compaſſion on us. JESUS paſſed by, ſaw us polluted in our own blood, and ſaid unto us, "Live," *i. e.* preſerved us, even in our natural ſtate, from death. And when his time of love was come, he ſpread the ſkirt of his imputed righteouſneſs over us, and covered the nakedneſs of our ſouls, entered into covenant with us, and we became his. He waſhed us alſo with water, even in the laver of regeneration, and thoroughly waſhed us by his precious blood, from the guilt of all our ſins. He cloathed us alſo with broidered work, and decked us with ornaments, even with righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt. We did eat fine flour and honey at his ordinances, and we fed on JESUS CHRIST in our hearts by faith, with thankſgiving. In ſhort, we were made exceeding beautiful, and the kingdom of GOD was erected in our hearts. We were renowned among our neighbours for our love to GOD, and all that knew us took knowledge of us, that we had been with JESUS. But alas! how have we fallen, who were once ſons of the morning! How have we truſted in our own beauty, have grown ſpiritually proud, and provoked

voked our patient and unſpeakably long-ſuffering LORD to anger? Where is that ardent love we ſpake of, when we told him, that, though we ſhould die for him, we would not deny him in any wiſe? How deſperately wicked, and deceitful above all things, have we proved our hearts to be, ſince we have done all theſe things, even the work of an imperious woman? Theſe are great and numerous charges; but great and numerous as they are, there is not a ſingle believer here preſent, but, if he knows his own heart, may plead guilty to ſome, or all of them. But this is a tender point: I ſee you concerned: your tears, O believers, are a proof of the anguiſh of your ſouls. And can any of us give any reaſon, why JESUS CHRIST ſhould not give us a bill of divorcement, and put us away? May he not juſtly ſpeak to us as he did to his adultreſs *Iſrael*, in the forementioned xvith of *Ezekiel*, "Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD; I will judge thee as women that break wedlock, and ſhed blood, are judged. I will give thee blood in fury and jealouſy, becauſe thou haſt not remembered the days of thy youth, but haſt fretted me in all theſe things. Behold, therefore, I alſo will recompence thy way upon thy head. I will even deal with thee as thou haſt done, who haſt deſpiſed the oath, in breaking the covenant, the marriage contract that was between us." This, I am perſuaded, you will confeſs to be the treatment which we all moſt juſtly deſerve. But be not overwhelmed with overmuch ſorrow: for though the LORD our GOD is a jealous GOD, and will certainly viſit our offences with a rod, and our backſlidings with a ſpiritual ſcourge, yet his loving-kindneſs will he not utterly take from us, nor ſuffer his truth to fail. Though we have changed, yet he changeth not: He abideth faithful: his loving-kindneſs abideth for evermore. Hark! how ſweetly he ſpeaks to his backſliding people of old; "O *Iſrael*, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, but in me is thy help. I will heal their backſliding, and love them freely." And in the verſes immediately following the words of the text, how comfortably does he addreſs his eſpouſed people! "In a little wrath, I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlaſting kindneſs will I have mercy on thee, ſaith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of *Noah* unto me: for as I have ſworn, that the waters of *Noah* ſhould no more

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go over the earth; ſo have I ſworn, that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the LORD that hath mercy on thee." O that this goodneſs may lead us to repentance! O that this unparalleled, infinite, unchangeable love, may conſtrain us to an univerſal, uniform, chearful, unanimous, perſevering obedience to all the commands of GOD!

Brethren, my heart is enlarged towards you, and I could dwell a long while upon the many great and precious invitations that are made to backſliders, to return to their firſt love, and do their firſt works: but it is high time for me, if, as was propoſed,

III. I give to every one their proper portion; to ſpeak to thoſe poor ſouls, who know nothing of this bleſſed Bridegroom of the church, and conſequently cannot yet ſay, "My Maker is my huſband."

Ah! I pity you from my inmoſt ſoul; I could weep over, and for you, though perhaps you will not weep for yourſelves. But ſurely you would weep, and howl too, did you know the miſerable condition thoſe are in, who are not married to JESUS CHRIST. Will you give me leave (I think I ſpeak it in much love) to inform you, that if you are not married to JESUS CHRIST, you are married to the law, the world, the fleſh, and the devil, neither of which can make you happy; but all, on the contrary, concur to make you miſerable. Hear ye not, ye that are married to the law, and ſeek to be juſtified in the ſight of GOD, partly, at leaſt, if not wholly, by your own works, what the law ſaith to thoſe that are under it, as a covenant of works? "Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them." Every word breathes threatening and ſlaughter to poor fallen creatures. Curſed, both here and hereafter, be this man, and every one, naturally engendered of the offſpring of *Adam*, without exception, that continueth not, even to the very end of life, in all things; not only in ſome, or many, but in all things, that are written in the book of the law, to do them, in the utmoſt perfection: for "be

that offendeth in one point, is guilty of all." So that, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, whoſoever is guilty of one wicked thought, word, or action, is under the curſe of an angry ſin-avenging GOD. "For as many as are under the law, are under the curſe." And do you know what it is to be under the curſe of GOD, and to have the wrath of GOD abide upon you? If you did, I believe you would not be ſo unwilling to be divorced from the law, and be eſpouſed, as chaſte virgins, to JESUS CHRIST.

And why are ye ſo wedded to the world? Did it ever prove faithful or ſatisfactory to any of its votaries? Has not *Solomon* reckoned up the ſum total of worldly happineſs? And what does it amount to? "Vanity, vanity, ſaith the preacher, all is vanity," nay he adds, "and vexation of ſpirit." And has not a greater than *Solomon* informed us, that a man's life, the happineſs of a man's life, doth not conſiſt in the things which he poſſeſſeth? Beſides, "know ye not that the friendſhip of this world is enmity with GOD; ſo that whoſoever will be a friend to the world, (to the corrupt cuſtoms and vices of it) is an enemy to GOD?" And what better reaſons can you give for being wedded to your luſts? Might not the poor ſlaves in the gallies, as reaſonably be wedded to their chains? For do not your luſts fetter down your ſouls from GOD? Do they not lord it, and have they not dominion over you? Do not they ſay, Come, and ye come; Go, and ye go; Do this, and ye do it? And is not he or ſhe that liveth in pleaſure, dead, whilſt he liveth? And above all, how can ye bear the thoughts of being wedded to the devil, as every natural man is: for thus ſpeaks the ſcripture, "He now ruleth in the children of diſobedience." And how can ye bear to be ruled by one, who is ſuch a profeſſed open enemy to the moſt high and holy GOD? Who will make a drudge of you, whilſt you live, and be your companion in endleſs and extreme torment, after you are dead? For thus will our LORD ſay to thoſe on the left hand, "Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." But,

IV. Will you permit me, O ſinners, that I may draw towards a cloſe of this diſcourſe, to propoſe a better match to you

your ſouls. This is a part of the diſcourſe which I long to come to, it being my heart's deſire, and earneſt prayer to GOD, that your ſouls may be ſaved. "And now, O LORD GOD Almighty, thou Father of mercies, and GOD of all conſolations, thou GOD and Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who haſt promiſed to give thy Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for his poſſeſſion, ſend me good ſpeed this day, O LORD, ſend me now proſperity. Behold, I ſtand here without the camp, bearing a little of thy dear Son's ſacred reproach! Hear me, O LORD, hear me, and according to thy word, let thy dear, thine only begotten Son, ſee of the travel of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied! O help me ſo to ſpeak, that many may believe on, and cleave unto thy bleſſed, thine holy child JESUS!"

But who am I, that I ſhould undertake to recommend the bleſſed JESUS to others, who am myſelf altogether unworthy to take his ſacred name into my polluted lips? Indeed, my brethren, I do not count myſelf worthy of ſuch an honour; but ſince it has pleaſed him, in whom all fulneſs dwells, to count me worthy, and put me into the miniſtry, the very ſtones would cry out againſt me, did I not attempt, at leaſt, to liſp out his praiſe, and earneſtly recommend the ever-bleſſed JESUS to the choice of all.

Thus *Abraham*'s faithful ſervant behaved, when ſent out to fetch a wife for his maſter *Iſaac*. He ſpake of the riches and honours, which GOD had conferred on him; but what infinitely greater honours and riches, has the GOD and Father of our LORD JESUS, conferred on his only Son, to whom I now invite every chriſtleſs ſinner! To you, therefore, I call, O ye ſons of men, aſſuring you, there is every thing in JESUS that your hearts can deſire, or hunger and thirſt after. Do people in diſpoſing of themſelves or their children in marriage, generally covet to be matched with perſons of *great names*? Let this conſideration ſerve as a motive to ſtir you up to match with JESUS. For GOD the Father has given him a name above every name; he has upon his veſture, and upon his thigh, a name written, "The King of kings, and the Lord of lords;" and here in the text we are told, "The Lord of Hoſts is his name." Nor has he an empty title, but power equivalent; for he is a prince, as well as a ſaviour. "All

power is given unto him, both in heaven and on earth:" "The God of the whole earth, (ſays our text) he ſhall be called." The government of men, of the church, and of devils, is put upon his ſhoulders: "Thrones, principalities and powers, are made ſubject unto him; by him kings reign, and princes decree juſtice; he ſetteth up one, and putteth down another: and of his kingdom there ſhall be no end." Will *riches* be an inducement unto you to come and match with JESUS? Why then, I can tell you, the riches of JESUS are infinite: for unto me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach to poor ſinners, the unſearchable riches of JESUS CHRIST. I appeal to you that are his ſaints, whether you have not found this true, by happy experience; and though ſome of you, may have been acquainted with him thirty, forty, fifty years ago, do you not find his riches are yet unſearchable, and as much paſt finding out, as they were the very firſt moment in which you gave him your hearts!

Would you match with a *wiſe huſband?* Haſte then, ſinners, come away to JESUS: He is the fountain of wiſdom, and makes all that come unto him, wiſe unto ſalvation; "He is the wiſdom of the Father: the LORD poſſeſſed him in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. When he prepared the heavens, he was there; when he appointed the foundations of the earth, then was he with him, as one brought up with him; he was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." As he is wiſe, ſo is he *holy*; and therefore, in the words of our text, he is ſtiled, "The Redeemer, the Holy One of *Iſrael*:" and by the angel *Gabriel*, "That holy Thing." The apoſtles, addreſſing GOD the Father, ſtile him his "holy child JESUS:" and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, and the angels in heaven, ceaſe not day or night, ſaying, "Holy, holy, holy." Nor is his *beauty* inferior to his wiſdom or holineſs; the ſeraphs veil their faces, when they appear before him: "He is the chiefeſt among ten thouſand, nay, he is altogether lovely." And, as he is altogether lovely, ſo is he altogether *loving*: his name and his nature is Love. GOD, GOD in CHRIST is love: love in the abſtract. And in this has he manifeſted his love, in that, whilſt we were yet ſinners, nay open enemies, JESUS, in his

own due time, died for the ungodly. He loved us ſo as to give himſelf for us. O what manner of love is this! What was *Jacob*'s love to *Rachel*, in compariſon of the love which JESUS bore to a periſhing world! He became a curſe for us. For it is written, "Curſed is every man that hangeth upon a tree." What *Zipporah* ſaid to her huſband improperly, JESUS may ſay properly to his ſpouſe the church, "A bloody wife haſt thou been to me, becauſe of the crucifixion." For he has purchaſed her with his own blood. And having once loved his people, he loves them unto the end. His love, like himſelf, is from everlaſting to everlaſting. He hates putting away: though we change, yet he changeth not: he abideth faithful. When we are married here, there comes in that ſhocking clauſe, to uſe the words of holy Mr. *Boſton*, "Till death us doth part;" but death itſelf ſhall not ſeparate a true believer from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS his Lord: for he will never ceaſe loving his Bride, till he has loved her to heaven, and preſented her before his Father, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing. Nay, his love will, as it were, but be beginning, through the endleſs ages of eternity.

And now, Sirs, what ſay you? Shall I put that queſtion to you, which *Rebecca*'s relations, upon a propoſal of marriage, put to her? "Will ye go with the man?" With the God-man, this infinitely great, this infinitely powerful, this all-wiſe, all-holy, altogether lovely, ever-loving JESUS? What objection have you to make againſt ſuch a gracious offer? One would imagine, you had not a ſingle one; but it is to be feared, through the prevalency of unbelief, and the corruption of your deſperately wicked deceitful hearts, you are ready to urge ſeveral. Methinks I hear ſome of you ſay within yourſelves, "We like the propoſal, but alas! we are poor." Are you ſo? If that be all, you may, notwithſtanding, be welcome to JESUS: "For has not GOD choſen the poor of this world, to make them rich in faith, and heirs of his everlaſting kingdom?" And what ſays that Saviour, to whom I am now inviting you? "Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And what ſays his Apoſtle concerning him? "Though he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. But ſay you, "We are not

only poor, but we are in debt; we owe GOD ten thouſand talents, and have nothing to pay;" but that need not keep you back: for GOD the Father, from the LORD JESUS, his dearly beloved Son, has received double for all believers ſins: the blood of JESUS cleanſeth from them all. But you are blind, and miſerable, and naked; to whom then ſhould you fly for ſuccour, but to JESUS, who came to open the eyes of the blind, to ſeek and ſave the miſerable and loſt, and cloath the naked with his perfect and ſpotleſs righteouſneſs. And now, what can hinder your eſpouſals with the dear and ever-bleſſed Lamb of GOD? I know but of one thing, that dreadful ſin of unbelief. But this is my comfort, JESUS died for unbelief, as well as for other ſins, and has promiſed to ſend down the Holy Spirit to convince the world of this ſin in particular: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go away, I will ſend the Comforter, and he will convince the world of ſin." What ſin? of unbelief; "becauſe they believe not on me." O that this promiſe may be ſo fulfilled in your hearts, and JESUS may ſo become the author of divine faith in your ſouls, that you may be able to ſend me the ſame meſſage as a good woman in *Scotland* on her dying bed, ſent me by a friend: "Tell him, (ſay ſhe) for his comfort, that at ſuch a time he married me to the LORD JESUS." This would be comfort indeed. Now that we can marry you to CHRIST: No; the Holy Ghoſt muſt tie the marriage knot. But ſuch honour have all GOD'S miniſters; under him they eſpouſe poor ſinners to JESUS CHRIST. "I have eſpouſed you (ſays St. *Paul*) as a chaſte virgin to JESUS CHRIST." O that you may ſay, We will go with the man; then will I bow my head, as *Abraham's* ſervant did, and go with joy and tell my Maſter, that he has not left his poor ſervant deſtitute this day: then ſhall I rejoice in your felicity. For I know, my Maſter will take you into the banqueting-houſe of his ordinances, and his banner over you ſhall be love. That this may be the happy caſe of you all, may the glorious GOD grant, for the ſake of JESUS his dearly beloved Son, the glorious bridegroom of his church; to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. *Amen*, and *Amen*.

SERMON

SERMON XIII.

The Potter and the Clay.

JER. xviii. 1—6.

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, ſaying, Ariſe, and go down to the potter's houſe, and there I will cauſe thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's houſe, and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the veſſel that he made of clay was marred in the hands of the potter, ſo he made it again another veſſel, as ſeemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, ſaying, O houſe of Iſrael, cannot I do with you as this potter? ſaith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, ſo are ye in mine hand, O houſe of Iſrael.

AT ſundry times, and in divers manners, GOD was pleaſed to ſpeak to our fathers by the prophets, before he ſpoke to us in theſe laſt days by his Son. To *Elijah*, he revealed himſelf by a ſmall ſtill voice. To *Jacob*, by a dream. To *Moſes*, he ſpake face to face. Sometimes he was pleaſed to ſend a favourite prophet on ſome eſpecial errand; and whilſt he was thus employed, vouchſafed to give him a particular meſſage, which he was ordered to deliver without reſerve to all the inhabitants of the land. A very inſtructive inſtance of this kind we have recorded in the paſſage now read to you. The firſt verſe informs us that it was a word, or meſſage, which came immediately from the LORD to the prophet *Jeremiah*. At what time, or how the prophet was employed

when it came, we are not told. Perhaps, whilſt he was praying for thoſe who would not pray for themſelves: Perhaps, near the morning, when he was ſlumbering or muſing on his bed. For the word came to him, ſaying, "Ariſe." And what muſt he do when riſen? He muſt "go down to the potter's houſe" (the prophet knew where to find it) "and there (ſays the great Jehovah) I will cauſe thee to hear my words." *Jeremiah* does not confer with fleſh and blood; he does not object that it was dark or cold, or deſire that he might have his meſſage given him there, but without the leaſt heſitation is immediately obedient to the heavenly viſion. "Then (ſays he) I went down to the potter's houſe, and behold he wrought a work upon the wheels." Juſt as he was entering into the houſe or workſhop, the potter, it ſeems, had a veſſel upon his wheel. And was there any thing ſo extraordinary in this, that it ſhould be uſhered in with the word BEHOLD? What a dreaming viſionary, or ſuperſtitious enthuſiaſt, would this *Jeremiah* be accounted, even by many who read his prophecies with ſeeming reſpect, was he alive now? But this was not the firſt time *Jeremiah* had heard from heaven in this manner. He therefore willingly obeyed; and had you or I accompanied him to the potter's houſe, I believe we ſhould have ſeen him ſilently, but intenſely waiting upon his great and all-wiſe Commander, to know wherefore he ſent him thither. Methinks I ſee him all attention. He takes notice, that "the veſſel was of clay;" but as he held it in his hand, and turned round the wheel, in order to work it into ſome particular form, "it was marred in the hands of the potter," and conſequently unfit for the uſe he before intended to put it to. And what becomes of this marred veſſel? Being thus marred, I ſuppoſe, the potter, without the leaſt imputation of injuſtice, might have thrown it aſide, and taken up another piece of clay in its room. But he did not. "He made it again another veſſel." And does the potter call a council of his domeſtics, to enquire of them what kind of veſſel they would adviſe him to make of it? No, in no wiſe. "He made it again another veſſel, as ſeemed good to the potter to make it."

"Then," adds *Jeremiah*, whilſt he was in the way of duty —then—whilſt he was mentally crying, LORD what wouldſt

thou have me to do? "Then the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, O houſe of *Iſrael*, cannot I do with you as this potter? ſaith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the hands of the potter (marred, and unfit for the firſt deſigned purpoſe) ſo are ye in mine hand, O houſe of *Iſrael*." At length, then, *Jeremiah* hath his ſermon given to him: ſhort, but popular. It was to be delivered to the whole houſe of *Iſrael*, princes, prieſts, and people: ſhort, but pungent, even ſharper than a two-edged ſword. What! ſays the ſovereign LORD of heaven and earth, muſt I be denied the privilege of a common potter? May I not do what I will with my own? "Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hands, ſo are ye in mine hands, O houſe of *Iſrael*. I made and formed you into a people, and bleſſed you above any other nation under heaven: but, O *Iſrael*, thou by thy backſlidings haſt deſtroyed thyſelf. As the potter therefore might juſtly have thrown aſide his marred clay, ſo may I juſtly unchurch and unpeople you. But what if I ſhould come over the mountains of your guilt, heal your backſlidings, revive my work in the midſt of the years, and cauſe your latter end greatly to increaſe? Behold, as the clay is in the hands of the potter, lying at his diſpoſal, either to be deſtroyed or formed into another veſſel, ſo are ye in my hands, O houſe of *Iſrael*: I may either reject, and thereby ruin you, or I may reviſit and revive you according to my own ſovereign good will and pleaſure, and who ſhall ſay unto me, what doſt thou?"

This ſeems to be the genuine interpretation, and primary intention of this beautiful part of holy writ. But waving all further enquiries about its primary deſign or meaning, I ſhall now proceed to ſhew, that what the glorious Jehovah here ſays of the houſe of *Iſrael* in general, is applicable to every individual of mankind in particular. And as I preſume this may be done, without either wire-drawing ſcripture on the one hand, or wreſting it from its original meaning on the other, not to detain you any longer, I ſhall, from the paſſage thus explained and paraphraſed, deduce, and endeavour to enlarge on theſe two general heads.

Firſt, I ſhall undertake to prove, that every man naturally engendered of the offspring of *Adam*, is in the ſight of the all-ſeeing, heart-ſearching GOD, only as a "piece of marred clay."

Secondly, That being thus marred, he muſt neceſſarily be renewed: and under this head, we ſhall likewiſe point out by whoſe agency this mighty change is to be brought about.

Theſe particulars being diſcuſſed, way will naturally be made for a ſhort word of application.

Firſt, To prove that every man naturally engendered of the offspring of *Adam*, is in the ſight of an all-ſeeing, heart-ſearching God, only as a piece of marred clay.

Be pleaſed to obſerve, that we ſay every man *naturally* engendered of the offspring of *Adam*, or every man ſince the fall: for if we conſider man as he firſt came out of the hands of his Maker, he was far from being in ſuch melancholy circumſtances, No; he was originally made upright; or as *Moſes*, that ſacred penman, declares, "God made him after his own image." Surely never was ſo much expreſſed in ſo few words; which hath often made me wonder how that great critic *Longinus*, who ſo juſtly admires the dignity and grandeur of *Moſes*'s account of the creation, and "GOD ſaid, Let there be light, and there was light;" I ſay I have often wondered why he did not read a little further, and beſtow as juſt an encomium upon this ſhort, but withal inexpreſſibly auguſt and comprehenſive deſcription of the formation of man, "ſo GOD created man in his own image." Struck with a deep ſenſe of ſuch amazing goodneſs, and that he might impreſs yet a deeper ſenſe of it upon our minds too, he immediately adds, "in the image of GOD made he him." A council of the moſt adorable Trinity was called on this important occaſion: GOD did not ſay, Let there be a man, and there was a man, but GOD ſaid, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeneſs." This is the account which the lively oracles of GOD do give us of man in his firſt eſtate: but it is very remarkable, that the tranſition from the account of his creation to that of his miſery, is very quick, and why? For a very good reaſon, becauſe he ſoon fell from his primeval dignity; and by that fall, the divine image is ſo defaced, that he is now to be valued only as antiquarians value an ancient medal, merely for the ſake of the image and ſuperſcription once ſtamped upon it; or of a ſecond divine impreſs, which, through grace, it may yet receive.

Let

Let us take a more particular ſurvey of him, and ſee whether theſe things are ſo or not: and firſt, as to his *underſtanding*. As man was created originally "after GOD in knowledge," as well as righteouſneſs and true holineſs, we may rationally infer, that his underſtanding, in reſpect to things natural, as well as divine, was of a prodigious extent: for he was made but a little lower than the angels, and conſequently being like them, excellent in his underſtanding, he knew much of GOD, of himſelf, and all about him; and in this as well as every other reſpect, was, as Mr. *Collier* expreſſes it in one of his eſſays, a perfect major: but this is far from being our caſe now. For in reſpect to *natural things*, our underſtandings are evidently darkened. It is but little that we can know, and even that little knowledge which we can acquire, is with much wearineſs of the fleſh, and we are doomed to gain it as we do our daily bread, I mean by the ſweat of our brows.

Men of low and narrow minds ſoon commence wiſe in their own conceits: and having acquired a little ſmattering of the learned languages, and made ſome ſmall proficiency in the dry ſciences, are eaſily tempted to look upon themſelves as a head taller than their fellow mortals, and accordingly too, too often put forth great ſwelling words of vanity. But perſons of a more exalted, and extenſive reach of thought, dare not boaſt. No: they know that the greateſt ſcholars are in the dark, in reſpect to many even of the minuteſt things in life: and after all their painful reſearches into the *Arcanæ Naturæ*, they find ſuch an immenſe void, ſuch an unmeaſurable expanſe yet to be travelled over, that they are obliged at laſt to conclude, almoſt with reſpect to every thing, "that they know nothing yet as they ought to know." This conſideration, no doubt, led *Socrates*, when he was aſked by one of his ſcholars, why the oracle pronounced him the wiſeſt man on earth, to give him this judicious anſwer, "Perhaps it is, "becauſe I am moſt ſenſible of my own ignorance." Would to GOD, that all who call themſelves chriſtians, had learnt ſo much as this heathen! We ſhould then no longer hear ſo many *learned men*, falſely ſo called, betray their ignorance by boaſting of the extent of their ſhallow underſtanding, nor by profeſſing themſelves ſo wiſe, prove themſelves ſuch arrant pedantic fools.

If

If we view our underſtandings in reſpect to *ſpiritual things*, we ſhall find that they are not only darkened, but become darkneſs itſelf, even "darkneſs that may be felt" by all who are not paſt feeling. And how ſhould it be otherwiſe, ſince the infallible word of GOD aſſures us, that they are alienated from the light and life of GOD, and thereby naturally as incapable to judge of divine and ſpiritual things, comparatively ſpeaking, as a man born blind is incapacitated to diſtinguiſh the various colours of the rainbow. "The natural man, (ſays an inſpired apoſtle) diſcerneth not the things of the Spirit of GOD;" ſo far from it, "they are fooliſhneſs unto him;" and why? Becauſe they are only to be "ſpiritually diſcerned." Hence it was, that *Nicodemus*, who was bleſſed with an outward and divine revelation, who was a ruler of the *Jews*, nay a maſter of *Iſrael*, when our LORD told him, "he muſt be born again;" appeared to be quite grappled. "How (ſays he) can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a ſecond time into his mother's womb and be born? how can theſe things be?" Were three more abſurd queſtions ever propoſed by the moſt ignorant man alive? or can there be a clearer proof of the blindneſs of man's underſtanding, in reſpect to divine, as well as natural things? Is not man then a piece of marred clay?

This will appear yet more evident, if we conſider the *perverſe bent of his will.* Being made in the very image of GOD; undoubtedly before the fall, man had no other will but his Maker's. GOD's will, and *Adam*'s, were then like uniſons in muſic. There was not the leaſt diſunion, or diſcord between them. But now he hath a will, as directly contrary to the will of GOD, as light is contrary to darkneſs, or heaven to hell. We all bring into the world with us a carnal mind, which is not only an enemy to GOD, but "enmity itſelf, and which is therefore not ſubject unto the law of GOD, neither indeed can it be." A great many ſhew much zeal in talking againſt the man of ſin, and loudly (and indeed very juſtly) exclaim againſt the *Pope* for ſitting in the temple, I mean the church of CHRIST, and "exalting himſelf above all that is called GOD." But ſay not within thyſelf, who ſhall go to *Rome*, to pull down this ſpiritual antichriſt? as though there was no antichriſt but what is without us. For know, O

man,

man, whoever thou art, an infinitely more dangerous anti-chriſt, becauſe leſs diſcerned, even *ſelf-will*, ſits daily in the temple of thy heart, exalting itſelf above all that is called GOD, and obliging all its votaries to ſay of CHRIST himſelf, that Prince of peace, "we will not have this man to reign over us." GOD's people, whoſe ſpiritual ſenſes are exerciſed about ſpiritual things, and whoſe eyes are opened to ſee the abominations that are in their hearts, frequently feel this to their ſorrow. Whether they will or not, this enmity from time to time bubbles up, and in ſpight of all their watchfulneſs and care, when they are under the preſſure of ſome ſharp affliction, a long deſertion, or tedious night of temptation, they often find ſomething within riſing in rebellion againſt the all-wiſe diſpoſals of divine Providence, and ſaying unto GOD their heavenly Father, "what doſt thou?" This makes them to cry (and no wonder, ſince it conſtrained one of the greateſt ſaints and apoſtles firſt to introduce the expreſſion) "O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?" The ſpiritual and renewed ſoul groans thus, being burdened; but as for the natural and unawakened man, it is not ſo with him; ſelf-will, as well as every other evil, either in a more latent or diſcernable manner, reigns in his unrenewed ſoul, and proves him, even to a demonſtration to others, whether he knows, or will confeſs it himſelf or not, that in reſpect to the diſorders of his will, as well as his underſtanding, man is only a piece of marred clay.

A tranſient view of fallen man's *affections* will yet more firmly corroborate this melancholy truth. Theſe, at his being firſt placed in the paradiſe of GOD, were always kept within proper bounds, fixed upon their proper objects, and, like ſo many gentle rivers, ſweetly, ſpontaneouſly and habitually glided into their ocean, GOD. But now the ſcene is changed. For we are now naturally full of vile affections, which like a mighty and impetuous torrent carry all before them. We love what we ſhould hate, and hate what we ſhould love; we fear what we ſhould hope for, and hope for what we ſhould fear; nay, to ſuch an ungovernable height do our affections ſometimes riſe, that though our judgments are convinced to the contrary, yet we will gratify our paſſions though it be at the expence of our preſent and eternal welfare.

We

We feel a war of our affections, warring againſt the law of our minds, and bringing us into captivity to the law of ſin and death. So that *video meliora proboque, deteriora ſequor*, I approve of better things but follow worſe, is too, too often the practice of us all.

I am ſenſible, that many are offended, when mankind are compared to beaſts and devils. And they might have ſome ſhadow of reaſon for being ſo, if we aſſerted in a phyſical ſenſe, that they were really beaſts and really devils. For then, as I once heard a very learned prelate, who was objecting againſt this compariſon, obſerve, "a man being a beaſt would be incapable, and being a devil, would be under an impoſſibility of being ſaved." But when we make uſe of ſuch *ſhocking compariſons*, as he was pleaſed to term them, we would be underſtood only in a moral ſenſe; and in ſo doing, we aſſert no more than ſome of the moſt holy men of GOD have ſaid of themſelves, and others, in the lively oracles many ages ago. Holy *David*, the man after GOD's own heart, ſpeaking of himſelf, ſays, "ſo fooliſh was I, and as a beaſt before thee." And holy *Job*, ſpeaking of man in general, ſays, that "he is born as a wild aſs's colt," or take away the expletive, which as ſome think ought to be done, and then he poſitively aſſerts, that man is a wild aſs's colt. And what ſays our LORD, "Ye are of your father the devil;" and "the whole world is ſaid to lie in him, the wicked one, who now rules in the children of diſobedience," that is, in all unrenewed ſouls. Our ſtupidity, proneneſs to fix our affections on the things of the earth, and our eagerneſs to make proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof, evidence us to be earthly and brutal; and our mental paſſions, anger, hatred, malice, envy, and ſuch like, prove with equal ſtrength, that we are alſo deviliſh. Both together conſpire to evince, that in reſpect to his affections, as well as his underſtanding and will, man deſervedly may be termed a piece of marred clay.

The preſent *blindneſs of natural conſcience* makes this appear in a yet more glaring light; in the ſoul of the firſt man *Adam*, conſcience was no doubt the candle of the LORD, and enabled him rightly and inſtantaneouſly to diſcern between good and evil, right and wrong. And, bleſſed be GOD! ſome remains of this are yet left; but alas, how dimly does it burn, and

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how eaſily and quickly is it covered, or put out and extinguiſhed. I need not ſend you to the heathen world, to learn the truth of this; you all know it by experience. Was there no other evidence, your own conſciences are inſtead of a thouſand witneſſes, that man, as to his natural conſcience, as well as underſtanding, will and affections, is much marred clay.

Nor does that great and boaſted *Diana*, I mean unaſſiſted *unenlightened reaſon*, leſs demonſtrate the juſtneſs of ſuch an aſſertion. Far be it from me to decry or exclaim againſt human reaſon. CHRIST himſelf is called the "LOGOS, the Reaſon;" and I believe it would not require much learning, or take up much time to prove, that ſo far and no farther than as we act agreeably to the laws of CHRIST JESUS, are we any way conformable to the laws of right reaſon. His ſervice is therefore called "a reaſonable ſervice." And however his ſervants and followers may now be looked upon as fools and madmen; yet there will come a time, when thoſe who deſpiſe and ſet themſelves to oppoſe divine revelation, will find, that what they now call reaſon, is only *reaſon depraved*, and as utterly incapable, of itſelf, to guide us into the way of peace, or ſhew the way of ſalvation, as the men of *Sodom* were to find *Lot*'s door after they were ſtruck with blindneſs by the angels, who came to lead him out of the city. The horrid and dreadful miſtakes, which the moſt refined reaſoners in the heathen world ran into, both as to the object, as well as manner of divine worſhip, have ſufficiently demonſtrated the weakneſs and depravity of human reaſon: nor do our modern boaſters afford us any better proofs of the greatneſs of its ſtrength, ſince the beſt improvement they generally make of it, is only to reaſon themſelves into downright wilful infidelity, and thereby reaſon themſelves out of eternal ſalvation. Need we now any further witneſs, that man, fallen man, is altogether a piece of marred clay?

But this is not all, we have yet more evidence to call; for do the blindneſs of our underſtandings, the perverſeneſs of our will, the rebellion of our affections, the corruption of our conſciences, the depravity of our reaſon prove this charge; and does not the preſent *diſordered frame* and *conſtitution of our bodies* confirm the ſame alſo? Doubtleſs in this reſpect, man,

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In the moſt literal ſenſe of the word, is a piece of marred clay. For GOD originally made him of the "duſt of the earth." So that notwithſtanding our boaſting of our high pedigrees, and different deſcent, we were all originally upon a level, and a little red earth was the common ſubſtratum out of which we were all formed. Clay indeed it was, but clay wonderfully modified, even by the immediate hands of the Creator of heaven and earth. One therefore hath obſerved, that it is ſaid "GOD built the man;" he did not form him raſhly or haſtily, but built and finiſhed him according to the plan before laid down in his own eternal mind. And though, as the great GOD is without body, parts, or paſſions, we cannot ſuppoſe when it is ſaid "GOD made man after his own image," that it has any reference to his body, yet I cannot help thinking (with Doctor *South*) that as the eternal Logos was hereafter to appear, GOD manifeſt in the fleſh, infinite wiſdom was undoubtedly exerted in forming a caſket into which ſo invaluable a pearl was in the fulneſs of time to be depoſited. Some of the ancients are ſaid to have aſſerted, that man at the firſt had what we call a glory ſhining round him; but without attempting to be wiſe above what is written, we may venture to affirm, that he had a glorious body, which knowing no ſin, knew neither ſickneſs nor pain. But now on this, as well as other accounts, he may juſtly be called *Ichabod*; for its primitive ſtrength and glory are ſadly departed from it, and like the ruins of ſome ancient and ſtately fabric, only ſo much left as to give us ſome faint idea of what it was when it firſt appeared in its original and perfect beauty. The apoſtle *Paul*, therefore, who knew how to call things by their proper names, as well as any man living, does not ſcruple to term the human body, though in its original conſtitution fearfully and wonderfully made, a "vile body;" vile indeed! ſince it is ſubject to ſuch vile diſeaſes, put to ſuch vile, yea very vile uſes, and at length is to come to ſo vile an end. "For duſt we are, and to duſt we muſt return." This among other conſiderations, we may well ſuppoſe, cauſed the bleſſed JESUS to weep at the grave of *Lazarus*. He wept, not only becauſe his friend *Lazarus* was dead, but he wept to ſee human nature, through man's own default, thus laid in ruins, by being ſubject unto ſuch a diſſolution, made like unto the beaſts that periſh.

Let us here pauſe a while, and with our ſympathizing LORD, ſee if we cannot ſhed a few ſilent tears at leaſt, upon the ſame ſorrowful occaſion. Who, who is there amongſt us, that upon ſuch a melancholy review of man's preſent, real, and moſt deplorable depravity both in body and ſoul, can refrain from weeping over ſuch a piece of marred clay? Who, who can help adopting holy *David*'s lamentation over *Saul* and *Jonathan*? "How are the mighty fallen! How are they ſlain in their high places!" Originally it was not ſo. No, "GOD made man after his own image: in the image of GOD made he man." Never was there ſo much expreſſed in ſo few words. He was created after GOD in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

This is the account, which the ſacred volume gives us of this intereſting point. This, this is that bleſſed book, that book of books, from whence, together with an appeal to the experience of our own hearts, and the teſtimonies of all paſt ages, we have thought proper to fetch our proofs. For, after all, we muſt be obliged to divine revelation, to know what we were, what we are, and what we are to be. In theſe, as in a true glaſs, we may ſee our real and proper likeneſs. And from theſe only can we trace the ſource and fountain of all thoſe innumerable evils, which like a deluge have overflowed the natural and moral world. If any ſhould object againſt the authenticity of this revelation, and conſequently againſt the doctrine this day drawn from thence, they do in my opinion thereby very much confirm it. For unleſs a man was very much diſordered indeed, as to his underſtanding, will, affections, natural conſcience, and his power of reaſoning, he could never poſſibly deny ſuch a revelation, which is founded on a multiplicity of infallible external evidences, hath ſo many internal evidences of a divine ſtamp in every page, is ſo ſuited to the common exigencies of all mankind, ſo agreeable to the experience of all men, and which hath been ſo wonderfully handed and preſerved to us, hath been ſo inſtrumental to the convicting, converting, and comforting ſo many millions of ſouls, and hath ſtood the teſt of the moſt ſevere ſcrutinies, and exact criticiſms of the moſt ſubtle and refined, as well as of the moſt malicious and perſecuting enemies, that ever lived, even from the beginning of time to this very day. Perſons of ſuch a

turn of mind, I think, are rather to be prayed for, than diſputed with, if ſo be this perverſe wickedneſs of their hearts may be forgiven them: "They are in the very gall of bitterneſs, and muſt have "their conſciences ſeared as it were with a red-hot iron," and muſt have their eyes "blinded by the GOD of this world," otherwiſe they could not but ſee, and feel, and aſſent to the truth of this doctrine, of man's being univerſally depraved; which not only in one or two, but in one or two thouſands, in every page, I could almoſt ſay, is written, in ſuch legible characters, that he that runs may read. Indeed, revelation itſelf is founded upon the doctrine of the fall. Had we kept our original integrity, the law of GOD would have yet been written in our hearts, and thereby the want of a divine revelation, at leaſt ſuch as ours, would have been ſuperſeded; but being fallen, inſtead of riſing in rebellion againſt GOD, we ought to be filled with unſpeakable thankfulneſs to our all bountiful Creator, who by a few lines in his own books hath diſcovered more to us, than all the philoſophers and moſt learned men in the world could, or would, have diſcovered, though they had ſtudied to all eternity.

I am well aware, that ſome who pretend to own the validity of divine revelation, are notwithſtanding enemies to the doctrine that hath this day been delivered; and would fain elude the force of the proofs generally urged in defence of it, by ſaying, they only beſpeak the corruption of particular perſons, or have reference only to the heathen world: but ſuch perſons err, not knowing their own hearts, or the power of JESUS CHRIST: for by nature there is no difference between *Jew* or *Gentile*, *Greek* or *Barbarian*, bond or free. We are altogether equally become abominable in GOD's ſight, all equally fallen ſhort of the glory of GOD, and conſequently all alike ſo many pieces of marred clay.

How GOD came to ſuffer man to fall? how long man ſtood before he fell? and how the corruption contracted by the fall, is propagated to every individual of his ſpecies? are queſtions of ſuch an abſtruſe and critical nature, that ſhould I undertake to anſwer them, would be only gratifying a ſinful curioſity, and tempting you, as Satan tempted our firſt parents, to eat forbidden fruit. It will much better anſwer the

the deſign of this preſent diſcourſe, which is practical, to paſs on

II. To the next thing propoſed, and point out to you the abſolute neceſſity there is of this fallen nature's being renewed.

This I have had all along in my eye, and on account of this, have purpoſely been ſo explicit on the firſt general head: for has *Archimedes* once ſaid, "Give me a place where I may fix my foot, and I will move the world;" ſo without the leaſt imputation of arrogance, with which, perhaps, he was juſtly chargeable, we may venture to ſay, grant the foregoing doctrine to be true, and then deny the neceſſity of man's being renewed who can.

I ſuppoſe, I may take it for granted, that all of you amongſt whom I am now preaching the kingdom of GOD, hope after death to go to a place which we call Heaven. And my heart's deſire and prayer to GOD for you is, that you all may have manſions prepared for you there. But give me leave to tell you, was you now to ſee theſe heavens opened, and the angel (to uſe the words of the ſeraphic *Hervey*) cloathed with all his heavenly drapery, with one foot upon the earth, and another upon the ſea; nay, were you to ſee and hear the angel of the everlaſting covenant, JESUS CHRIST himſelf, proclaiming "time ſhall be no more," and giving you all an invitation immediately to come to heaven; heaven would be no heaven to you, nay it would be a hell to your ſouls, unleſs you were firſt prepared for a proper enjoyment of it here on earth. "For what communion hath light with darkneſs?" Or what fellowſhip could unrenewed ſons of *Belial* poſſibly keep up with the pure and immaculate JESUS?

The generality of people form ſtrange ideas of heaven. And becauſe the ſcriptures, in condeſcenſion to the weakneſs of our capacities, deſcribe it by images taken from earthly delights and human grandeur, therefore they are apt to carry their thoughts no higher, and at the beſt only form to themſelves a kind of *Mahometan* paradiſe. But permit me to tell you, and GOD grant it may ſink deep into your hearts! Heaven is rather a ſtate than a place; and conſequently, unleſs

you are previouſly diſpoſed by a ſuitable ſtate of mind, you could not be happy even in heaven itſelf. For what is grace but glory militant? What is glory but grace triumphant? This conſideration made a pious author ſay, that "holineſs, "happineſs, and heaven, were only three different words for one "and the ſelf-ſame thing." And this made the great *Preſton*, when he was about to die, turn to his friends, ſaying, "I am "changing my place, but not my company." He had converſed with GOD and good men on earth; he was going to keep up the ſame, and infinitely more refined communion with GOD, his holy angels, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, in heaven.

To make us meet to be bliſsful partakers of ſuch heavenly company, this "marred clay," I mean, theſe depraved natures of ours, muſt neceſſarily undergo an univerſal moral change: our underſtandings muſt be enlightened; our wills, reaſon, and conſciences, muſt be renewed; our affections muſt be drawn toward, and fixed upon things above; and becauſe fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, this corruptible muſt put on incorruption, this mortal muſt put on immortality. And thus old things muſt literally paſs away, and behold all things, even the body as well as the faculties of the ſoul, muſt become new.

This moral change is what ſome call, repentance, ſome, converſion, ſome, regeneration; chooſe what name you pleaſe, I only pray GOD, that we all may have the thing. The ſcriptures call it holineſs, ſanctification, the new creature, and our LORD calls it a "New birth, or being born again, or born from above." Theſe are not barely figurative expreſſions, or the flights of eaſtern language, nor do they barely denote a relative change of ſtate conferred on all thoſe who are admitted into CHRIST's church by baptiſm; but they denote a real, moral change of heart and life, a real participation of the divine life in the ſoul of man. Some indeed content themſelves with a figurative interpretation; but unleſs they are made to experience the power and efficacy thereof, by a ſolid living experience in their own ſouls, all their learning, all their laboured criticiſms, will not exempt them from a real damnation. CHRIST hath ſaid it, and CHRIST will ſtand, "Unleſs a man," learned or unlearned, high or low, though

he

he be a maſter of *Iſrael* as *Nicodemus* was, unleſs he "be born again, he cannot ſee, he cannot enter into the kingdom of GOD."

If it be enquired, who is to be the potter? and by whoſe agency this marred clay is to be formed into another veſſel? Or in other words, if it be aſked, how this great and mighty change is to be effected? I anſwer, not by the mere dint and force of moral ſuaſion. This is good in its place. And I am ſo far from thinking, that chriſtian preachers ſhould not make uſe of rational arguments and motives in their ſermons, that I cannot think they are fit to preach at all, who either cannot, or will not uſe them. We have the example of the great GOD himſelf for ſuch a practice; "Come (ſays he) and let us reaſon together." And St. *Paul*, that prince of preachers, "reaſoned of temperance, and righteouſneſs, and a judgment to come." And it is remarkable, "that whilſt he was reaſoning of theſe things, *Felix* trembled." Nor are the moſt perſuaſive ſtrains of holy rhetoric leſs needful for a ſcribe ready inſtructed to the kingdom of GOD. The ſcriptures both of the Old and New Teſtament, every where abound with them. And when can they be more properly employed, and brought forth, than when we are acting as ambaſſadors of heaven, and beſeeching poor ſinners, as in CHRIST's ſtead, to be reconciled unto GOD. All this we readily grant. But at the ſame time, I would as ſoon go to yonder church-yard, and attempt to raiſe the dead carcaſes, with a "come forth," as to preach to dead ſouls, did I not hope for ſome ſuperior power to make the word effectual to the deſigned end. I ſhould only be like a ſounding braſs for any ſaving purpoſes, or as a tinkling cymbal. Neither is this change to be wrought by the power of our own free-will. This is an idol every where ſet up, but we dare not fall down and worſhip it. "No man (ſays CHRIST) can come to me, unleſs the Father draw him." Our own free-will, if improved, may reſtrain us from the commiſſion of many evils, and put us in the way of converſion; but, after exerting our utmoſt efforts (and we are bound in duty to exert them) we ſhall find the words of our own church article to be true, that "man ſince "the fall hath no power to turn to GOD." No, we might as ſoon attempt to ſtop the ebbing and flowing of the tide,

and calm the moſt tempeſtuous ſea, as to imagine that we can ſubdue, or bring under proper regulations, our own unruly wills and affections by any ſtrength inherent in ourſelves.

And therefore, that I may keep you no longer in ſuſpence, I inform you, that this heavenly potter, this bleſſed agent, is the Almighty Spirit of GOD, the Holy Ghoſt, the third perſon in the moſt adorable Trinity, coeſſential with the Father and the Son. This is that Spirit, which at the beginning of time moved on the face of the waters, when nature lay in one univerſal chaos. This was the Spirit that overſhadowed the Holy Virgin, before that holy thing was born of her: and this ſame Spirit muſt come, and move upon the chaos of our ſouls, before we can properly be called the ſons of GOD. This is what *John* the baptiſt calls "being baptized with the Holy Ghoſt," without which, his and all other baptiſms, whether infant or adult, avail nothing. This is that fire, which our LORD came to ſend into our earthly hearts, and which I pray the LORD of all lords to kindle in every unrenewed one this day.

As for the extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghoſt, ſuch as working of miracles, or ſpeaking with divers kinds of tongues, they are long ſince ceaſed. But as for this miracle of miracles, turning the ſoul to GOD by the more ordinary operations of the Holy Ghoſt, this abides yet, and will abide till time itſelf ſhall be no more. For it is he that ſanctifieth us, and all the elect people of GOD. On this account, true believers are ſaid to be "born from above, to be born not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD." Their ſecond, as well as their firſt creation, is truly and purely divine. It is, therefore, called "a creation;" but put ye on (ſays the apoſtle) the new man which is created"—And how? Even as the firſt man was, "after GOD in righteouſneſs and true holineſs."

Theſe, theſe are the precious truths, which a ſcoffing world would fain rally or ridicule us out of. To produce this glorious change, this new creation, the glorious JESUS left his Father's boſom. For this he led a perſecuted life; for this he died an ignominious and accurſed death; for this he roſe again; and for this he now ſitteth at the right hand

of

of his Father. All the precepts of his goſpel, all his ordinances, all his providences, whether of an afflictive or proſperous nature, all divine revelation from the beginning to the end, all center in theſe two points, to ſhew us how we are fallen, and to begin, carry on, and compleat a glorious and bleſſed change in our ſouls. This is an end worthy of the coming of ſo divine a perſonage. To deliver a multitude of ſouls of every nation, language and tongue, from ſo many moral evils, and to reinſtate them in an incomparably more excellent condition than that from whence they are fallen, is an end worthy the ſhedding of ſuch precious blood. What ſyſtem of religion is there now, or was there ever exhibited to the world, any way to be compared to this? Can the deiſtical ſcheme pretend in any degree to come up to it? Is it not noble, rational, and truly divine? And why then will not all that hitherto are ſtrangers to this bleſſed reſtoration of their fallen natures, (for my heart is too full to abſtain any longer from an application) why will you any longer diſpute or ſtand out againſt it? Why will you not rather bring your clay to this heavenly Potter, and ſay from your inmoſt ſouls, "Turn us, O good LORD, and ſo ſhall we be turned?" This, you may and can do: and if you go thus far, who knows but that this very day, yea this very hour, the heavenly Potter may take you in hand, and make you veſſels of honour fit for the Redeemer's uſe? Others that were once as far from the kingdom of GOD as you are, have been partakers of this bleſſedneſs. What a wretched creature was *Mary Magdalene?* And yet out of her JESUS CHRIST caſt ſeven devils. Nay, he appeared to her firſt, after he roſe from the dead, and ſhe became as it were an apoſtle to the very apoſtles. What a covetous creature was *Zaccheus?* He was a griping cheating publican; and yet, perhaps, in one quarter of an hour's time, his heart is enlarged, and he made quite willing to give half of his goods to feed the poor. And to mention no more, what a cruel perſon was *Paul.* He was a perſecutor, a blaſphemer, injurious; one that breathed out threatnings againſt the diſciples of the LORD, and made havoc of the church of CHRIST. And yet what a wonderful turn did he meet with, as he was journeying to *Damaſcus?* from a perſecutor, he became a preacher; was afterwards made a ſpiritual father to thouſands, and now pro-

bably ſits neareſt the LORD JESUS CHRIST in glory. And why all this? That he might be made an example to them that ſhould hereafter believe. O then believe, repent; I beſeech you, believe the goſpel. Indeed, it is glad tidings, even tidings of great joy. You will then no longer have any thing to ſay againſt the doctrine of *Original Sin*; or charge the Almighty fooliſhly, for ſuffering our firſt parents to be prevailed on to eat ſuch ſour grapes, and permitting thereby their children's teeth to be ſet on edge. You will then no longer cry out againſt the doctrine of the *New Birth*, as enthuſiaſm, or brand the aſſertors of ſuch bleſſed truths with the opprobrious names of fools and madmen. Having felt, you will then believe; having believed, you will therefore ſpeak; and inſtead of being veſſels of wrath, and growing harder and harder in hell fire, like veſſels in a potter's oven, you will be made veſſels of honour, and be preſented at the great day by JESUS, to his heavenly Father, and be tranſlated to live with him as monuments of rich, free, diſtinguiſhing and ſovereign grace, for ever and ever.

You, that have in ſome degree experienced the quickening influence (for I muſt not conclude without dropping a word or two to GOD's children) you know how to pity, and therefore, I beſeech you alſo to pray for thoſe, to whoſe circumſtances this diſcourſe is peculiarly adapted. But will you be content in praying for them? Will you not ſee reaſon to pray for yourſelves alſo? Yes, doubtleſs, for yourſelves alſo. For you, and you only know, how much there is yet lacking in your faith, and how far you are from being partakers in that degree, which you deſire to be, of the whole mind that was in CHRIST JESUS. You know what a body of ſin and death you carry about with you, and that you muſt neceſſarily expect many turns of GOD's providence and grace, before you will be wholly delivered from it. But thanks be to GOD, we are in ſafe hands. He that has been the author, will alſo be the finiſher of our faith. Yet a little while, and we like him ſhall ſay "It is finiſhed;" we ſhall bow down our heads and give up the ghoſt. Till then, (for to thee, O LORD, will we now direct our prayer) help us, O Almighty Father, in patience to poſſeſs our ſouls. Behold, we are the clay, and thou art the Potter. Let not the thing formed ſay to him that formed

formed it, whatever the diſpenſations of thy future Will concerning us may be, Why doſt thou deal with us thus? Behold, we put ourſelves as blanks in thine hands, deal with us as ſeemeth good in thy ſight, only let every croſs, every affliction, every temptation, be overruled to the ſtamping thy bleſſed image in more lively characters on our hearts; that ſo paſſing from glory to glory, by the powerful operations of thy bleſſed Spirit, we may be made thereby more and more meet for, and at laſt be tranſlated to a full, perfect, endleſs, and uninterrupted enjoyment of glory hereafter, with thee O Father, thee O Son, and thee O bleſſed Spirit; to whom, three perſons but one GOD, be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all honour, power, might, majeſty and dominion, now and to all eternity. Amen and Amen.

SERMON XIV.

The LORD our Righteouſneſs.

JEREMIAH xxiii. 6.

The LORD *our Righteouſneſs.*

WHOEVER is acquainted with the nature of mankind in general, or the propenſity of his own heart in particular, muſt acknowledge, that *ſelf-righteouſneſs* is the laſt idol that is rooted out of the heart: being once born under a covenant of works, it is natural for us all to have recourſe to a covenant of works, for our everlaſting ſalvation. And we have contracted ſuch a deviliſh pride, by our fall from GOD, that we would, if not wholly, yet in part at leaſt, glory in being the cauſe of our own ſalvation. We cry out againſt popery, and that very juſtly; but we are all Papiſts, at leaſt, I am ſure, we are all Arminians by nature; and therefore no wonder ſo many natural men embrace that ſcheme. It is true, we diſclaim the doctrine of merit, are aſhamed directly to ſay we deſerve any good at the hands of GOD; therefore, as the Apoſtle excellently well obſerves, "we go about," we fetch a circuit, "to eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of our own, and," like the Phariſees of old, "will not wholly ſubmit to that righteouſneſs which is of GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD."

This is the foreſt, though, alas! the moſt common evil that was ever yet ſeen under the ſun. An evil, that in any age, eſpecially in theſe dregs of time wherein we live, cannot ſufficiently be inveighed againſt. For as it is with the people, ſo it is with the prieſts; and it is to be feared, even in thoſe places, where once the truth as it is in JESUS was eminently

preached, many miniſters are ſo ſadly degenerated from their pious anceſtors, that the doctrines of grace, eſpecially the perſonal, *all-ſufficient righteouſneſs of* JESUS, is but too ſeldom, too ſlightly mentioned. Hence the love of many waxeth cold; and I have often thought, was it poſſible, that this ſingle conſideration would be ſufficient to raiſe our venerable forefathers again from their graves; who would thunder in their ears their fatal error.

The righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST is one of thoſe great myſteries, which the angels deſire to look into, and ſeems to be one of the firſt leſſons that GOD taught men after the fall. For, what were the coats that GOD made to put on our firſt parents, but types of the application of the merits or righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST to believers hearts? We are told, that thoſe coats were made of ſkins of beaſts; and, as beaſts were not then food for men, we may fairly infer, that thoſe beaſts were ſlain in ſacrifice, in commemoration of the great ſacrifice, JESUS CHRIST, thereafter to be offered. And the ſkins of the beaſts thus ſlain, being put on *Adam* and *Eve*, they were hereby taught how their nakedneſs was to be covered with the righteouſneſs of the Lamb of GOD.

This is it which is meant, when we are told, "*Abraham* believed on the LORD, and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs." In ſhort, this is it of which both the law and the prophets have ſpoken, eſpecially *Jeremiah* in the words of the text, "The LORD our righteouſneſs."

I propoſe, through divine grace,

I. To conſider who we are to underſtand by the word LORD.

II. How the LORD is man's righteouſneſs.

III. I will conſider ſome of the chief objections that are generally urged againſt this doctrine.

IV. I ſhall ſhew ſome very ill conſequences that flow naturally from denying this doctrine.

V. Shall conclude with an exhortation to all to come to CHRIST by faith, that they may be enabled to ſay with the Prophet in the text, "The LORD our righteouſneſs."

I. I am

I. I am to conſider who we are to underſtand by the word LORD. The LORD our righteouſneſs.

If any Arians or Socinians are drawn by curioſity to hear what the babler has to ſay, let them be aſhamed of denying the divinity of that LORD, who has bought poor ſinners with his precious blood. For the perſon mentioned in the text, under the character of the LORD, is JESUS CHRIST. Ver. 5. "Behold, the days come, ſaith the LORD, that I will raiſe unto *David* a righteous branch, a king ſhall reign and proſper, and ſhall execute judgment and juſtice in the earth. In his days (ver. 6.) *Judah* ſhall be ſaved, and *Iſrael* ſhall dwell ſafely; and this is his name whereby he ſhall be called, The LORD our righteouſneſs." By the *righteous branch*, all agree, that we are to underſtand JESUS CHRIST. He it is that is called the LORD in our text. If ſo, if there were no other text in the Bible to prove the divinity of CHRIST, this is ſufficient: for if the word *Lord* may properly belong to JESUS CHRIST, he muſt be GOD. And, as you have it in the margin of your Bibles, the word *Lord* is in the original *Jehovah*, which is the eſſential title of GOD himſelf. Come then, ye Arians, kiſs the Son of GOD, bow down before him, and honour him, even as ye honour the Father. Learn of the angels, thoſe morning-ſtars, and worſhip him as truly GOD: for otherwiſe you are as much idolators, as thoſe that worſhip the Virgin *Mary*. And as for you Socinians, who ſay CHRIST was a mere man; and yet profeſs that he was your Saviour, according to your own principles you are accurſed: for, if CHRIST be a mere man, then he is only an arm of fleſh: and it is written, "Curſed is he that truſteth on an arm of fleſh." But I would hope, there are no ſuch monſters here; at leaſt, that, after theſe conſiderations, they would be aſhamed of broaching ſuch monſtrous abſurdities any more. For it is plain, that, by the word *Lord*, we are to underſtand the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who here takes to himſelf the title of *Jehovah*, and therefore muſt be very GOD of very GOD; or, as the Apoſtle devoutly expreſſes it, "GOD bleſſed for evermore."

II. How the LORD is to be man's righteouſneſs, comes next to be conſidered.

And that is, in one word, by *imputation*. For it pleaſed GOD, after he had made all things by the word of his power, to create man after his own image. And ſo infinite was the condeſcenſion of the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, that, although he might have inſiſted on the everlaſting obedience of him and his poſterity; yet he was pleaſed to oblige himſelf, by a covenant or agreement made with his own creatures, upon condition of an unſinning obedience, to give them immortality and eternal life. For when it is ſaid, "The day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die;" we may fairly infer, ſo long as he continued obedient, and did not eat thereof, he ſhould ſurely live. The 3d of *Geneſis* gives us a full, but mournful account, how our firſt parents broke this covenant, and thereby ſtood in need of a better righteouſneſs than their own, in order to procure their future acceptance with GOD. For what muſt they do? They were as much under a covenant of works as ever. And though, after their diſobedience, they were without ſtrength; yet they were obliged not only to do, but continue to do all things, and that too in the moſt perfect manner, which the LORD had required of them: and not only ſo, but to make ſatisfaction to GOD's infinitely offended juſtice, for the breach they had already been guilty of. Here then opens the amazing ſcene of *divine philanthropy*; I mean, GOD's love to man: For behold, what man could not do, JESUS CHRIST, the ſon of his Father's love, undertakes to do for him. And that GOD might be juſt in juſtifying the ungodly, though "he was in the form of GOD, and therefore thought it no robbery to be equal with GOD; yet he took upon him the form of a ſervant," even human nature. In that nature he obeyed, and thereby fulfilled the whole moral law in our ſtead; and alſo died a painful death upon the croſs, and thereby became a curſe for, or inſtead of, thoſe whom the Father had given to him. As GOD, he ſatisfied, at the ſame time that he obeyed and ſuffered as man; and, being GOD and man in one perſon, he wrought out a full, perfect, and ſufficient righteouſneſs for all to whom it was to be imputed.

Here then we ſee the meaning of the word *righteouſneſs*. It implies the active as well as paſſive obedience of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. We generally, when talking of the merits

of

of CHRIST; only mention the latter,—his death; whereas, the former,—his life and active obedience, is equally neceſſary. CHRIST is not ſuch a ſaviour as becomes us, unleſs we join both together. CHRIST not only died, but lived; not only ſuffered, but obeyed for, or inſtead of, poor ſinners. And both theſe jointly make up that compleat righteouſneſs, which is to be imputed to us, as the diſobedience of our firſt parents was made ours by imputation. In this ſenſe, and no other, are we to underſtand that parallel which the apoſtle *Paul* draws, in the vth of the *Romans*, between the firſt and ſecond *Adam*. This is what he elſewhere terms, "our being made the righteouſneſs of GOD in him." This is the ſenſe wherein the Prophet would have us to underſtand the words of the text; therefore, *Jer.* xxxiii. 16. "She (*i. e.* the church itſelf) ſhall be called, (having this righteouſneſs imputed to her) The LORD our righteouſneſs." A paſſage, I think, worthy of the profoundeſt meditation of all the ſons and daughters of *Abraham*.

Many are the objections which the proud hearts of fallen men are continually urging againſt this wholeſome, this divine, this ſoul-ſaving doctrine. I come now,

III. To anſwer ſome few of thoſe which I think the moſt conſiderable.

And, *Firſt*, they ſay, becauſe they would appear friends to morality, "That the doctrine of an imputed righteouſneſs is "deſtructive of good works, and leads to licentiouſneſs."

And who, pray, are the perſons that generally urge this objection? Are they men full of faith, and men really concerned for good works? No; whatever few exceptions there may be, if there be any at all, it is notorious, they are generally men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. The beſt title I can give them is, that of *profane moraliſts*, or moraliſts falſely ſo called. For I appeal to the experience of the preſent as well as paſt ages, if iniquity did and does not moſt abound, where the doctrine of CHRIST's whole perſonal righteouſneſs is moſt cried down, and moſt ſeldom mentioned: Arminian being antichriſtian principles, always did, and always will lead to antichriſtian practices. And never was there a reformation brought about in the church, but

t by the preaching the doctrine of an imputed righteouſneſs. ais, as that man of GOD, *Luther*, calls it, is "*Articulus ntis aut cadentis Eccleſiæ*," the article by which the Church nds or falls. And though the preachers of this doctrine are nerally branded by thoſe on the other ſide, with the oppro- ious names of Antinomians, deceivers, and what not; yet, elieve, if the truth of the doctrine on both ſides was to be dged of by the lives of the preachers and profeſſors of it, on ir ſide the queſtion would have the advantage every way.

It is true, this, as well as every other doctrine of grace, ay be abuſed. And perhaps the unchriſtian walk of ſome, ho have talked of CHRIST's imputed righteouſneſs, juſtifica- on by faith, and the like, and yet never felt it imputed to eir own ſouls, has given the enemies of the LORD thus uſe to blaſpheme. But this is a very unſafe, as well as a ry unfair way of arguing. The only queſtion ſhould be, Whether or not this doctrine of an imputed righteouſneſs, es in itſelf cut off the occaſion of good works, or lead to li- ntouſneſs? To this we may boldly anſwer, In no wiſe. excludes works, indeed, from being any cauſe of our juſtifi- ition in the ſight of GOD; but it requires good works as a oof of our having this righteouſneſs imputed to us, and as a clarative evidence of our juſtification in the ſight of men. nd then, how can the doctrine of an imputed righteouſneſs a doctrine leading to licentiouſneſs?

It is all calumny. The apoſtle *Paul* introduceth an infidel aking this objection, in his epiſtle to the *Romans*; and none t infidels, that never felt the power of CHRIST's reſurrec- n upon their ſouls, will urge it over again. And therefore, twithſtanding this objection, with the Prophet in the text, e may boldly ſay, "The LORD is our righteouſneſs."

But Satan (and no wonder that his ſervants imitate him) en transforms himſelf into an angel of light: and there- re, (ſuch perverſe things will infidelity and Arminianiſm ake men ſpeak) in order to dreſs their objections in the beſt lours, ſome urge, "That our Saviour preached no ſuch doctrine; that in his ſermon on the mount, he mentions only morality:" and conſequently the doctrine of an im- ted righteouſneſs falls wholly to the ground.

But

But ſurely the men, who urge this objection, either never read, or never underſtood, our LORD's bleſſed diſcourſe, wherein the doctrine of an imputed righteouſneſs is ſo plainly taught, that he who runs, if he has eyes that ſee, may read.

Indeed our LORD does recommend morality and good works, (as all faithful miniſters will do) and clears the moral law from many corrupt gloſſes put upon it by the letter-learned Phariſees. But then, before he comes to this, 'tis remarkable, he talks of inward piety, ſuch as poverty of ſpirit, meekneſs, holy mourning, purity of heart, eſpecially hungring and thirſting after righteouſneſs; and then recommends good works, as an evidence of our having his righteouſneſs imputed to us, and theſe graces and divine tempers wrought in our hearts. "Let your light (that is, the divine light I before have been mentioning) ſhine before men, in a holy life; that they, ſeeing your good works, may glorify your father which is in heaven." And then he immediately adds, "Think not that I am come to deſtroy the moral law: I came not to deſtroy, (to take away the force of it as a rule of life) but to fulfil, (to obey it in its whole latitude, and give the compleat ſenſe of it.") And then he goes on to ſhew how exceeding broad the moral law is. So that our LORD, inſtead of ſetting aſide an imputed righteouſneſs in his ſermon upon the mount, not only confirms it, but alſo anſwers the foregoing objection urged againſt it, by making good works a proof and evidence of its being imputed to our ſouls. He, therefore, that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Prophet ſays in the words of the text, "The LORD our righteouſneſs."

But as Satan not only quoted ſcripture, but backed one temptation after another with it, when he attacked CHRIST in the wilderneſs; ſo his children generally take the ſame method in treating his doctrine. And, therefore, they urge another objection againſt the doctrine of an imputed righteouſneſs, from the example of the young man in the goſpel.

We may ſtate it thus: "The Evangeliſt *Mark*, ſay they, "chap. x. mentions a young man that came to CHRIST, "running, and aſking him what he ſhould do to inherit eter-"nal life? CHRIST referred him to the commandments, to

"know

" know what he muſt do to inherit eternal life. It is plain, " therefore, works were to be, partly at leaſt, the cauſe of " his juſtification: and conſequently the doctrine of an im- " puted righteouſneſs is unſcriptural." This is the objection in its full ſtrength: and little ſtrength in all its fulneſs. For, was I to prove the neceſſity of an imputed righteouſneſs, I ſcarce know how I could bring a better inſtance to make it good.

Let us take a nearer view of this young man, and of our LORD's behaviour towards him, *Mark* x. 17. the Evangeliſt tells us, " That when CHRIST was gone forth into the way, there came one running (it ſhould ſeem it was ſome noble- man; a rarity indeed to ſee ſuch a one running to CHRIST!) and not only ſo, but he kneeled to him, (perhaps many of his rank now, ſcarce knew the time when they kneeled to CHRIST) and aſked him, ſaying, Good Maſter, what ſhall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Then JESUS, to ſee whether or not he believed him to be what he really was, truly and properly GOD, ſaid unto him, " Why calleſt thou me good? There is none good but one, that is GOD." And, that he might directly anſwer his queſtion, ſays he, " Thou knoweſt the commandments: do not commit adultery, do not bear falſe witneſs, defraud not, honour thy father and thy mother." This was a direct anſwer to his queſtion; namely, That eternal life was not to be attained by his doings. For our LORD, by referring him to the commandments, did not (as the objectors inſinuate) in the leaſt hint, that his morality would recommend him to the favour and mercy of GOD: but he intended thereby, to make the law his ſchoolmaſter to bring him to himſelf; that the young man, ſeeing how he had broken every one of theſe commandments, might thereby be convinced of the inſufficiency of his own, and conſequently of the abſolute neceſſity of looking out for a better righteouſ- neſs, whereon he might depend for eternal life.

This was what our Lord deſigned. The young man being ſelf-righteous, and willing to juſtify himſelf, ſaid, " All theſe have I obſerved from my youth:" but had he known himſelf, he would have confeſſed, all theſe have I broken from my youth. For, ſuppoſing he had not actually committed adul- tery, had he never luſted after a woman in his heart? What,

if

if he had not really killed another, had he never been angry without a cauſe, or ſpoken unadviſedly with his lips? If ſo, by breaking one of the leaſt commandments in the leaſt degree, he became liable to the curſe of GOD: for "curſed is he (ſaith the law) that continueth not to do all things that are written in this book." And therefore, as obſerved before, our LORD was ſo far from ſpeaking againſt, that he treated the young man in that manner, on purpoſe to convince him of the neceſſity of an imputed righteouſneſs.

But perhaps they will reply, it is ſaid, "JESUS beholding him, loved him." And what then? This he might do with a human love, and at the ſame time this young man have no intereſt in his blood. Thus CHRIST is ſaid to wonder, to weep over *Jeruſalem*, and ſay, "O that thou hadſt known, &c." But ſuch-like paſſages are to be referred only to his human nature. And there is a great deal of difference between the love wherewith CHRIST loved this young man, and that wherewith he loved *Mary*, *Lazarus*, and their ſiſter *Martha*. To illuſtrate this by a compariſon: A miniſter of the LORD JESUS CHRIST ſeeing many amiable diſpoſitions, ſuch as a readineſs to hear the word, a decent behaviour at public worſhip, and a life outwardly ſpotleſs in many, cannot but ſo far love them; but then there is much difference betwixt the love which a miniſter feels for ſuch, and that divine love, that union and ſympathy of ſoul, which he feels for thoſe that he is ſatisfied are really born again of GOD. Apply this to our LORD's caſe, as a faint illuſtration of it. Conſider what has been ſaid upon the young man's caſe in general, and then, if before you were fond of this objection, inſtead of triumphing, like him you will go ſorrowful away. Our Saviour's reply to him more and more convinces us of the truth of the prophet's aſſertion in the text, that "the LORD is our righteouſneſs."

But there is a fourth, and a grand objection yet behind, which is taken from the 25th chapter of *Matthew*, "where "our LORD is deſcribed as rewarding people with eternal "life, becauſe they fed they hungry, cloathed the naked, and "ſuch-like. Their works therefore were a cauſe of their "juſtification, conſequently the doctrine of imputed righte-"ouſneſs is not agreeable to ſcripture."

This,

This, I confeſs, is the moſt plauſible objection that is brought againſt the doctrine inſiſted on from the text; and that we may anſwer it in as clear and brief a manner as may be, we confeſs, with the Article of the Church of *England*, "That albeit good works do not juſtify us, yet they will "follow after juſtification, as fruits of it; and though they "can claim no reward in themſelves, yet foraſmuch as they "ſpring from faith in CHRIST, and a renewed ſoul, they ſhall "receive a reward of grace, though not of debt; and conſe-"quently the more we abound in ſuch good words, the greater "will be our reward when JESUS CHRIST ſhall come to "judgment."

Take theſe conſiderations along with us, and they will help us much to anſwer the objection now before us. For thus ſaith *Matthew*, "Then ſhall the King ſay to them on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye cloathed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came unto me. I will therefore reward you, becauſe you have done theſe things out of love to me, and hereby have evidenced yourſelves to be my true diſciples." And that the people did not depend on theſe good actions for their juſtification in the ſight of GOD, is evident. "For when ſaw we thee "an hungred, ſay they, and fed thee? or thirſty, and gave "thee drink? When ſaw we thee a ſtranger, and took thee in, "or naked, and cloathed thee? Or when ſaw we thee ſick, "or in priſon, and came unto thee?" Language, and queſtions, quite improper for perſons relying on their own righteouſneſs, for acceptance and acquittance in the ſight of GOD.

But then they reply againſt this: "In the latter part of the chapter, it is plain that JESUS CHRIST rejects and damns the others for not doing theſe things. And therefore, if he damns theſe for not doing, he ſaves thoſe for doing; and conſequently the doctrine of an imputed righteouſneſs is good for nothing."

But that is no conſequence at all; for GOD may juſtly damn any man for omitting the leaſt duty of the moral law, and yet in himſelf is not obliged to give to any one any re-

ward, ſuppoſing he has done all that he can. We are unprofitable ſervants; we have not done near ſo much as it was our duty to do, muſt be the language of the moſt holy ſouls living; and therefore, from or in ourſelves, cannot be juſtified in the ſight of GOD. This was the frame of the devout ſouls juſt now referred to. Senſible of this, they were ſo far from depending on their works for juſtification in the ſight of GOD, that they were filled, as it were, with a holy bluſhing, to think our LORD ſhould condeſcend to mention, much more to reward them for, their poor works of faith and labours of love. I am perſuaded their hearts would riſe with a holy indignation againſt thoſe who urge this paſſage, as an objection to the aſſertion of the prophet, that "the LORD is our righteouſneſs."

Thus, I think, we have fairly anſwered theſe grand objections, which are generally urged againſt the doctrine of an *imputed righteouſneſs*. Was I to ſtop here, I think I may ſay, "We are made more than conquerors through him that loved us." But there is a way of arguing which I have always admired, becauſe I have thought it always very convincing, by ſhewing the *abſurdities* that will follow from denying any particular propoſition in diſpute.

IV. This is the next thing that was propoſed. And never did greater or more abſurdities flow from the denying any doctrine, than will flow from denying the doctrine of CHRIST's imputed righteouſneſs.

And *firſt*, if we deny this doctrine, we turn the truth, I mean the word of GOD, as much as we can, into a lie, and utterly ſubvert all thoſe places of ſcripture which ſay that we are ſaved by grace; that it is not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt; that ſalvation is GOD's free gift; and that he who glorieth, muſt glory only in the LORD. For, if the whole perſonal righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST be not the ſole cauſe of my acceptance with GOD, if any work done by or foreſeen in me, was in the leaſt to be joined with it, or looked upon by GOD as an inducing, impulſive cauſe of acquitting my ſoul from guilt, then I have ſomewhat whereof I may glory in myſelf. Now boaſting is excluded in the great work of our redemption; but that cannot be, if we are ene-

ies to the doctrine of an imputed righteouſneſs. It would e endleſs to enumerate how many texts of ſcripture muſt be alſe, if this doctrine be not true. Let it ſuffice to affirm in he general, that if we deny an imputed righteouſneſs, we ay as well deny a divine revelation all at once: for it is the *alpha* and *omega*, the beginning and the end of the book of OD. We muſt either diſbelieve that, or believe what the rophet hath ſpoken in the text, "that the LORD is our ighteouſneſs."

But farther: I obſerved at the beginning of this diſ- ourſe, that we are all *Arminians* and *Papiſts* by nature: for as ne ſays, "*Arminianiſm* is the back way to *popery*." And here venture further to affirm, that if we deny the doctrine of an nputed righteouſneſs, whatever we may ſtile ourſelves, we re really *Papiſts* in our hearts, and deſerve no other title from en.

Sirs, what think you? Suppoſe I was to come and tell you, at you muſt intercede with ſaints, for them to intercede ith GOD for you; would you not then ſay, I was juſtly re- uted a *popiſh miſſionary* by ſome, and deſervedly thruſt out of ne ſynagogues by others? I ſuppoſe you would. And why? ecauſe, you would ſay, the interceſſion of JESUS CHRIST as ſufficient of itſelf, without the interceſſion of ſaints; and hat it was blaſphemous to join theirs with his, as though it as not ſufficient.

Suppoſe I went a little more round about, and told you hat the death of CHRIST was not ſufficient, without our eath being added to it; that you muſt die as well as CHRIST, oin your death with his, and then it would be ſufficient. Might you not then, with a holy indignation, throw duſt in he air, and juſtly call me a "ſetter forth of ſtrange doc- rines?" And now then, if it be not only abſurd, but blaſ- hemous, to join the interceſſion of ſaints with the interceſ- ion of CHRIST, as though his interceſſion was not ſufficient; r our death with the death of CHRIST, as though his death as not ſufficient: judge ye, if it be not equally abſurd, qually blaſphemous, to join our obedience, either wholly or part, with the obedience of CHRIST, as if that was not fficient. And if ſo, what abſurdities will follow the deny-

ing that the LORD, both as to his active and paſſive obedience, is our righteouſneſs?

One more abſurdity I ſhall mention, as following the denying this doctrine, and I have done.

I remember a ſtory of a certain prelate, who, after many arguments in vain urged to convince the Earl of *Rochester* of the inviſible realities of another world, took his leave of his lordſhip with ſome ſuch words as theſe: "Well, my lord, "if there be no hell, I am ſafe; but if there ſhould be ſuch "a thing as hell, what will become of you?" I apply this to thoſe that oppoſe the doctrine now inſiſted on. If there be no ſuch thing as the doctrine of an imputed righteouſneſs, thoſe who hold it, and bring forth fruit unto holineſs, are ſafe; but if there be ſuch a thing (as there certainly is) what will become of you that deny it? It is no difficult matter to determine. Your portion muſt be in the lake of fire and brimſtone for ever and ever. Since you will rely upon your works, by your works you ſhall be judged. They ſhall be weighed in the balance of the ſanctuary; and they will be found wanting. By your works therefore ſhall you be condemned; and you, being out of CHRIST, ſhall find GOD, to your poor wretched ſouls, a conſuming fire.

The great *Stoddard* of *Northampton* in *New-England*, has therefore well intitled a book which he wrote (and which I would take this opportunity to recommend) "The Safety of appearing in the Righteouſneſs of CHRIST." For why ſhould I lean upon a broken reed, when I can have the rock of ages to ſtand upon, that never can be moved?

And now, before I come to a more particular application, give me leave, in the apoſtle's language, triumphantly to cry out, "Where is the ſcribe, where the diſputer?" Where is the reaſoning infidel of this generation? Can any thing appear more reaſonable, even according to your own way of arguing, than the doctrine here laid down? Have you not felt a convincing power go along with the word? Why then will you not believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that ſo he may become the LORD *your* righteouſneſs?

But it is time for me to come a little cloſer to your conſciences.

Bre-

Brethren, though ſome may be offended at this doctrine, and may account it fooliſhneſs; yet, to many of you, I doubt not but it is precious, it being agreeable to the form of ſound words, which from your infancy has been delivered to you; and, coming from a quarter, you would leaſt have expected, may be received with more pleaſure and ſatisfaction. But give me leave to aſk you one queſtion; Can you ſay, the LORD our righteouſneſs? I ſay, the LORD *our* righteouſneſs. For entertaining this doctrine in your heads, without receiving the LORD JESUS CHRIST ſavingly by a lively faith into your hearts, will but increaſe your damnation. As I have often told you, ſo I tell you again, an unapplied CHRIST is no CHRIST at all. Can you then, with believing *Thomas*, cry out, "My LORD and my GOD?" Is CHRIST your ſanctification, as well as your outward righteouſneſs? For the word righteouſneſs, in the text, not only implies CHRIST's perſonal righteouſneſs imputed to us, but alſo holineſs wrought in us. Theſe two, GOD has joined together. He never did, he never does, he never will put them aſunder. If you are juſtified by the blood, you are alſo ſanctified by the Spirit of our LORD. Can you then in this ſenſe ſay, The LORD our righteouſneſs? Were you ever made to abhor yourſelves for your actual and original ſins, and to lothe your own righteouſneſs; for, as the prophet beautifully expreſſes it, "your righteouſneſs is as filthy rags? Were you ever made to ſee and admire the all-ſufficiency of CHRIST's righteouſneſs, and excited by the Spirit of GOD to hunger and thirſt after it? Could you ever ſay, my ſoul is athirſt for CHRIST, yea, even for the righteouſneſs of CHRIST? O when ſhall I come to appear before the preſence of my GOD in the righteouſneſs of CHRIST! nothing but CHRIST! nothing but CHRIST! Give me CHRIST, O GOD, and I am ſatisfied! my ſoul ſhall praiſe thee for ever.

Was this ever the language of your hearts? and, after theſe inward conflicts, were you ever enabled to reach out the arm of faith, and embrace the bleſſed JESUS in your ſouls, ſo that you could ſay, "my beloved is mine, and I am his?" If ſo, fear not, whoever you are. Hail, all hail, you happy ſouls! The LORD, the LORD CHRIST, the everlaſting GOD, is your righteouſneſs. CHRIST has juſtified you, who is he that condemneth you? CHRIST has died for you, nay rather is riſen

again, and ever liveth to make interceſſion for you. Being now juſtified by his grace, you have peace with GOD, and ſhall, ere long, be with JESUS in glory, reaping everlaſting and unſpeakable fruits both in body and ſoul. For there is no condemnation to thoſe that are really in CHRIST JESUS. "Whether *Paul* or *Apollos*, or life or death, all is yours if you are CHRIST's, for CHRIST is GOD's. My brethren, my heart is enlarged towards you! O think of the love of CHRIST in dying for you! If the LORD be your righteouſneſs, let the righteouſneſs of your LORD be continually in your mouth. Talk of, O talk of, and recommend the righteouſneſs of CHRIST, when you lye down, and when you riſe up, at your going out and coming in! Think of the greatneſs of the gift, as well as of the giver! Shew to all the world, in whom you have believed! Let all by your fruits know, that the LORD is your righteouſneſs, and that you are waiting for your LORD from heaven! O ſtudy to be holy, even as he who has called you, and waſhed you in his own blood, is holy! Let not the righteouſneſs of the LORD be evil ſpoken of through you. Let not JESUS be wounded in the houſe of his friends; but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, day by day. O think of his dying love! Let that love conſtrain you to obedience! having much forgiven, love much. Be always aſking, What ſhall I do, to expreſs my gratitude to the LORD, for giving me his righteouſneſs? Let that ſelf-abaſing, GOD-exalting queſtion be always in your mouths; "Why me, LORD? why me?" why am I taken, and others left? why is the LORD my righteouſneſs? why is he become my ſalvation, who have ſo often deſerved damnation at his hands?

My friends, I truſt I feel ſomewhat of a ſenſe of GOD's diſtinguiſhing love upon my heart; therefore I muſt divert a little from congratulating you, to invite poor chriſtleſs ſinners to come to him, and accept of his righteouſneſs, that they may have life.

Alas, my heart almoſt bleeds! What a multitude of precious ſouls are now before me! how ſhortly muſt all be uſhered into eternity! and yet, O cutting thought! was GOD now to require all your ſouls, how few, comparatively ſpeaking, could really ſay, the LORD *our* righteouſneſs!

And

And think you, *O ſinners*, that you will be able to ſtand in the day of judgment, if CHRIST be not your righteouſneſs! No, that alone is the wedding-garment in which you muſt appear. O chriſtleſs ſinners, I am diſtreſſed for you! the deſires of my ſoul are enlarged. O that this may be an accepted time! that the LORD may be your righteouſneſs! For whither would you flee, if death ſhould find you naked? Indeed there is no hiding yourſelves from his preſence. The pitiful fig-leaves of your own righteouſneſs will not cover your nakedneſs, when GOD ſhall call you to ſtand before him. *Adam* found them ineffectual, and ſo will you. O think of death! O think of judgment! Yet a little while, and time ſhall be no more; and then what will become of you, if the LORD be not your righteouſneſs? Think you that CHRIST will ſpare you? No, he that formed you, will have no mercy on you. If you are not of CHRIST, if CHRIST be not your righteouſneſs, CHRIST himſelf ſhall pronounce you damned. And can you bear to think of being damned by CHRIST? Can you bear to hear the LORD JESUS ſay to you, "Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Can you live, think you, in everlaſting burnings? Is your fleſh braſs, and your bones iron? what if they are? hell-fire, that fire prepared for the devil and his angels, will heat them through and through. And can you bear to depart from CHRIST? O that heart-piercing thought! Aſk thoſe holy ſouls, who are at any time bewailing an abſent GOD, who walk in darkneſs, and ſee no light, though but a few days or hours; aſk them, what it is to loſe a ſight and preſence of CHRIST? See how they ſeek him ſorrowing, and go mourning after him all the day long! And, if it is ſo dreadful to loſe the ſenſible preſence of CHRIST only for a day, what muſt it be to be baniſhed from him to all eternity?

But thus it muſt be, if CHRIST be not your righteouſneſs; For GOD's juſtice muſt be ſatisfied; and, unleſs CHRIST's righteouſneſs is imputed and applied to you here, you muſt hereafter be ſatisfying the divine juſtice in hell-torments eternally; nay, CHRIST himſelf ſhall condemn you to that place of torment. And how cutting is that thought! Methinks I ſee poor, trembling, chriſtleſs wretches, ſtanding before the bar of GOD, crying out, LORD, if we muſt be damned, let

ſome angel, or ſome archangel, pronounce the damnatory ſentence: but all in vain. CHRIST himſelf ſhall pronounce the irrevocable ſentence. Knowing therefore the terrors of the LORD, let me perſuade you to cloſe with CHRIST, and never reſt till you can ſay, "the LORD our righteouſneſs." Who knows but the LORD may have mercy on, nay, abundantly pardon you? Beg of GOD to give you faith; and, if the LORD gives you that, you will by it receive CHRIST, with his righteouſneſs, and his All. You need not fear the greatneſs or number of your ſins. For are you ſinners? ſo am I. Are you the chief of ſinners? ſo am I. Are you backſliding ſinners? ſo am I. And yet the LORD (for ever adored be his rich, free and ſovereign grace) the LORD is my righteouſneſs. Come then, *O young men*, who (as I acted once myſelf) are playing the prodigal, and wandering away afar off from your heavenly Father's houſe, come home, come home, and leave your ſwines trough. Feed no longer on the huſks of ſenſual delights; for CHRIST's ſake ariſe, and come home! your heavenly Father now calls you. See yonder the beſt robe, even the righteouſneſs of his dear Son, awaits you. See it, view it again and again. Conſider at how dear a rate it was purchaſed, even by the blood of GOD. Conſider what great need you have of it. You are loſt, undone, damned for ever, without it. Come then, poor, guilty prodigals, come home: indeed, I will not, like the elder brother in the goſpel, be angry; no, I will rejoice with the angels in heaven. And O that GOD would now bow the heavens, and come down! Deſcend, O Son of GOD, deſcend; and, as thou haſt ſhewn in me ſuch mercy, O let thy bleſſed Spirit apply thy righteouſneſs to ſome young prodigals now before thee, and clothe their naked ſouls with thy beſt robe!

But I muſt ſpeak a word to you, *young maidens*, as well as young men. I ſee many of you adorned, as to your bodies: but are not your ſouls naked? Which of you can ſay, the LORD is my righteouſneſs? which of you was ever ſolicitous to be dreſſed in this robe of invaluable price, and without which you are no better than whited ſepulchres in the ſight of GOD? Let not then ſo many of you, young maidens, any longer forget your chief and only ornament. O ſeek for the LORD to be your righteouſneſs, or otherwiſe burning will ſoon be upon you, inſtead of beauty!

And

And what ſhall I ſay to you of a middle age, you *buſy merchants*, you *cumbered Martha's*, who, with all your gettings, have not yet gotten the LORD to be your righteouſneſs? Alas! what profit will there be of all your labour under the ſun, if you do not ſecure this pearl of invaluable price? this one thing, ſo abſolutely needful, that it only can ſtand you in ſtead, when all other things ſhall be taken from you. Labour therefore no longer ſo anxiouſly for the meat which periſheth, but henceforward ſeek for the LORD to be your righteouſneſs, a righteouſneſs that will entitle you to life everlaſting. I ſee alſo many *hoary heads* here, and perhaps the moſt of them cannot ſay, the LORD is my righteouſneſs. O gray-headed ſinners, I could weep over you! your gray hairs, which ought to be your crown, and in which perhaps you glory, are now your ſhame. You know not that the LORD is your righteouſneſs: O haſte then, haſte ye, aged ſinners, and ſeek an intereſt in redeeming love! Alas, you have one foot already in the grave, your glaſs is juſt run out, your ſun is juſt going down, and it will ſet and leave you in an eternal darkneſs, unleſs the LORD be your righteouſneſs! Flee then, O flee for your lives! be not afraid. All things are poſſible with GOD. If you come, though it be at the eleventh hour, CHRIST JESUS will in no wiſe caſt you out. Seek then for the LORD to be your righteouſneſs, and beſeech him to let you know, how it is that a man may be born again when he is old! But I muſt not forget the *lambs* of the flock. To feed them was one of my LORD's laſt commands. I know he will be angry with me, if I do not tell them, that the LORD may be *their* righteouſneſs; and that of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven. Come then, ye little children, come to CHRIST; the LORD CHRIST ſhall be *your* righteouſneſs. Do not think, that you are too young to be converted. Perhaps many of you may be nine or ten years old, and yet cannot ſay, the LORD is our righteouſneſs; which many have ſaid, though younger than you. Come then, while you are young. Perhaps you may not live to be old. Do not ſtay for other people. If your fathers and mothers will not come to CHRIST, do you come without them. Let children lead them, and ſhew them how the LORD may be *their* righteouſneſs. Our LORD JESUS loved little children. You are his lambs; he bids me feed you. I

pray

pray GOD make you willing betimes to take the LORD for your righteouſneſs.

Here then I could conclude; but I muſt not forget the *poor negroes*; no, I muſt not. JESUS CHRIST has died for them, as well as for others. Nor do I mention you laſt, becauſe I deſpiſe your ſouls, but becauſe I would have what I ſhall ſay, make the deeper impreſſion upon your hearts. O that you would ſeek the LORD to be your righteouſneſs! Who knows but he may be found of you? For in JESUS CHRIST there is neither male nor female, bond nor free; even you may be the children of GOD, if you believe in JESUS. Did you never read of the eunuch belonging to the queen of *Candace*? a negro like yourſelves. He believed. The LORD was his righteouſneſs. He was baptized. Do you alſo believe, and you ſhall be ſaved. CHRIST JESUS is the ſame now as he was yeſterday, and will waſh you in his own blood. Go home then, turn the words of the text into a prayer, and intreat the LORD to be *your* righteouſneſs. Even ſo, come LORD JESUS, come quickly, into all our ſouls! *Amen*, LORD JESUS; *Amen* and *Amen!*

SERMON

SERMON XV.

The Righteouſneſs of CHRIST, an everlaſting Righteouſneſs.

DANIEL IX. 24.

And to bring in everlaſting Righteouſneſs.

ON reading theſe words, I cannot help addreſſing you in the language of the angels to the poor ſhepherds, who kept watch over their flocks by night, "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy," ſuch tidings, that if we have ears to hear, if we have eyes to ſee, and if our hearts have indeed experienced the grace of GOD, muſt cauſe us to cry out with the Virgin *Mary*, "My ſoul doth magnify the LORD, and my ſpirit doth rejoice in GOD my Saviour." The words which I have read to you, are part of one of the moſt explicit revelations that was given of JESUS CHRIST, before he made his public entrance into this our world. It has been obſerved by ſome, and very properly too, that it is one mark of the divine goodneſs to his creatures, that he is pleaſed to let light come in gradually upon the natural world. If the ſun from midnight darkneſs, was immediately to ſhine forth in his full meridian blaze, his great ſplendor would be apt to dazzle our eyes, and ſtrike us blind again: but GOD is pleaſed to make light come gradually in, and by that means we are prepared to receive it. And as GOD is pleaſed to deal with the natural, ſo he has dealt with the moral, with the ſpiritual world. The LORD JESUS CHRIST did not appear in his full glory all at once, but as the ſun riſes gradually, ſo did the LORD JESUS, the Sun of righteouſneſs, riſe gradually upon men, with healing under his wings. Hence it was, that our firſt parents had nothing to fix their faith upon, but that firſt promiſe,

promiſe, " The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head." And in future ages, at ſundry times, and after divers manners, GOD was pleaſed to ſpeak to our fathers by the prophets, before he ſpake to us in theſe laſt days by his ſon; and the prophets that were more peculiarly dear to GOD, it ſhould ſeem had more peculiar and extraordinary revelations vouchſafed to them, concerning JESUS CHRIST.

It is plain from the accounts we have in Scripture, that the Prophet *Daniel* was one of theſe; he is ſtiled by the angel, not only a " man that was beloved," but a " man that was *greatly* beloved," or as it is in the margin of your bibles, " he was a man of deſires," of large and extenſive deſires to promote the glory of GOD; he was a deſirable man, a man that did much good in his generation, and therefore his life was much to be deſired by thoſe who loved GOD. The words which I have choſen for the ſubject of our preſent meditation, contain part of a revelation made to this man. If you look back to the beginning of this chapter, you will find how the good man was employed, when GOD was pleaſed to give him this revelation; verſe 2. " In the firſt year of *Darius*'s reign, I *Daniel* underſtood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to *Jeremiah* the prophet, that he would accompliſh ſeventy years in the deſolations of *Jeruſalem*." *Daniel* was a great man, and withal a good man; great as he was, it ſeems he was not above reading his Bible; he made the Bible his conſtant ſtudy; for it is the Bible we are to underſtand by what is here termed books, and elſewhere, the ſcriptures of truth. He found, that the time for GOD's people being delivered from the captivity, was now at hand. Well, one would have thought, that therefore *Daniel* needed not to pray; but this, inſtead of retarding, quickened him in his prayers: and therefore we are told in the third verſe, " I ſet my face unto the LORD GOD, to ſeek by prayer and ſupplications, with faſting and ſackcloth, and aſhes." It is beautifully expreſſed: " he ſet his face," as though he was reſolved never to let his eye go off GOD, till GOD was pleaſed to give him an anſwer; he was reſolved, *Jacob*-like, to wreſtle with the LORD GOD, until GOD ſhould be pleaſed to give him the deſired bleſſing. We are told in the fourth verſe, that " he prayed unto the LORD, and made confeſſion," not only

only of his own ſins, but the ſins of his people. And when ye retire home to your houſes, before ye go to bed, I would recommend to you the reading of this prayer; every word of it beſpeaks his exceeding concern for the public good. It would take me up too much time, was I to make ſuch obſervations as indeed the prayer deſerves; to bring you ſooner to the words of the text, let us go forward to the twentieth verſe, and there you will find the ſucceſs that *Daniel* met with, when praying. Says he, "while I was praying and confeſſing my ſin, and the ſin of my people *Iſrael*, and preſenting my ſupplication before the LORD my GOD, for the holy mountain of my GOD; yea, while I was ſpeaking in prayer, even the man *Gabriel*, whom I had ſeen in the viſion at the beginning, being cauſed to fly ſwiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation." The manner in which *Daniel* expreſſes himſelf, is very emphatical: "While I was *ſpeaking in prayer*;" implying, that GOD ſuffers us, when we draw near to him by faith in prayer, to lay all our complaints before him; he ſuffers us to ſpeak unto, and talk with him, as a man talketh with his friend. *Daniel* at this time too was making *confeſſion* one part of his prayer; for we are never, never in a better frame to receive anſwers from above, than when we are humbling ourſelves before the LORD. He was not only confeſſing his own ſins, but he was confeſſing the ſins of his people; he was praying for thoſe, who perhaps ſeldom prayed for themſelves; "while I was ſpeaking in prayer, the man *Gabriel*:" which word, by interpretation, ſignifies *the ſtrength of* GOD; a very proper name, ſays Biſhop *Hall*, for that angel who was to come and bring the news to the world, of the GOD of ſtrength, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. This angel is here repreſented as flying, and as flying ſwiftly; to ſhow us how willing, how unſpeakably willing thoſe bleſſed ſpirits are, to bring good news to men. And it is upon this account, I ſuppoſe, that we are taught by our LORD to pray, "that GOD's will may be done by us on earth, as it is done in heaven," that we may imitate a little of that alacrity and vigour, which angels employ, when they are ſent on errands for GOD.

Well, here is not only mention made of the angel's flying ſwiftly, but there is mention made of the time that he came;

" He came and touched me, about the time of the evening oblation," that is, about three o'clock in the afternoon; at this time there was a ſacrifice made to GOD, and this ſacrifice was in a peculiar manner a type of the LORD JESUS, who in the evening of the world was to become a ſacrifice for ſinners. We are told in the 22d verſe, what meſſage this angel delivered, " He informed me, and talked with me, and ſaid, O *Daniel*, I am now come forth to give thee ſkill and underſtanding; at the beginning of thy ſupplication, the commandment came forth, and I am come to ſhow thee, for thou art greatly beloved, therefore underſtand the matter, and conſider the viſion." This paſſage, with ſuch-like paſſages of ſcripture, hath often comforted my ſoul, and may comfort the hearts of all GOD's people. There are a great many of you, perhaps, have prayed, and prayed again to GOD, and probably you do not find any anſwer given you: you pray for an enlarged heart, you pray for comfort, you pray for deliverance; GOD is pleaſed to withhold it for a while; then the devil ſtrikes in, and ſays, GOD has ſhut out your prayers; GOD will never hear, GOD will never regard you, therefore pray no more. But, my dear friends, this is a miſtake; a thouſand years are with GOD as one day; and the LORD JESUS has bid us, " to pray always, and not faint." You may have had your prayers heard, the very moment they went out of your lips, though it may not pleaſe your GOD, (and it may not be proper for you) to let you know that they are heard. " At the beginning of thy ſupplication, the commandment went forth;" and this very angel ſome hundred years after, told *Zacharias*, that his prayer was heard;" a prayer for what? a prayer for a child: it could not be ſuppoſed that at the very time *Zacharias* was praying for a child; but his prayer he had put up forty years before, GOD was pleaſed to anſwer ſo long afterwards.

But to proceed with *Gabriel*'s declaration, ver. 24. " Seventy years are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finiſh tranſgreſſion, to make an end of ſins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs," I do not intend to trouble you about the critical expoſition of theſe *ſeventy weeks*; commentators are divided exceedingly upon this ſubject; ſome of them explain

them

hem one way, and ſome another, and perhaps we ſhall ever know till the day of judgment, till the glorious day poken of in the New Teſtament, which are right. My intention is to dwell upon this particular part of the angel's meſſage, that ſome one perſon was to do ſomething *unſpeakble* for GOD's people, even "to bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs."

If you want to know who was the perſon that was to do his, look to the 26th verſe, and you will find the perſon mentioned, the LORD JESUS CHRIST: "after threeſcore and wo weeks ſhall the *Meſſiah* be cut off, but not for himſelf:" e is the perſon ſpoken of, he was "to put an end to ſin, to nake reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting ighteouſneſs."

From theſe important words, I ſhall endeavour,

irſt, To ſhew you what we are to underſtand by the word, "Righteouſneſs."

econdly, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you, upon what account it is, that the righteouſneſs mentioned in the text, is called an "everlaſting righteouſneſs."

hirdly, I ſhall ſhew, what we are to underſtand by "bringing it in." And,

Then ſpeak a word to ſaints and ſinners. And while I am peaking to your ears, may GOD, for the LORD JESUS HRIST's ſake, ſpeak to your hearts!

Firſt, To explain what we are to underſtand by the word, righteouſneſs." If I was to aſk ſome people what we are o underſtand by the word, righteouſneſs; if the perſon was n *Arminian*, or an enemy to the doctrine of free grace, he ould anſwer me, it ſignifies what we commonly call *moral neſty*, or doing juſtice between man and man. And, indeed, in various paſſages of ſcripture, the word righteouſneſs as no other meaning, at leaſt, it bears that meaning. I ppoſe, we are to underſtand it in this ſenſe, when we are ld, that *Paul*, preaching before *Felix*, "reaſoned of temerance, of righteouſneſs, and of a judgment to come." *Fe*r had been a very unrighteous and unjuſt man, and therefore,

fore, to convince him of his wickedneſs, to alarm his conſcience, to put him upon ſeeking help in the LORD JESUS, *Paul* preached not only of temperance, (for *Felix* had been a very intemperate man) but he preached to him of righteouſneſs, of the neceſſity of doing juſtice, becauſe he had been an unjuſt man; and he puts before him the judgment to come, in order to make him fly to JESUS CHRIST for deliverance from the bad conſequences of that judgment; and there are other places of ſcripture, where the word righteouſneſs may be underſtood in this ſenſe.

It likewiſe ſignifies inward holineſs, wrought in us by the bleſſed Spirit of GOD. But, I believe, the word righteouſneſs in my text ſignifies, what, I truſt moſt, I ſhould be glad if I could ſay, all who attend this night, will be glad to hear of: What is that? It is what all reformed divines, that have clear heads and clean hearts, call an *imputed righteouſneſs*, or the righteouſneſs of the LORD JESUS CHRIST to be imputed to poor ſinners upon their believing: and, if you aſk me, what I mean by an imputed righteouſneſs; not to ſhoot over your heads, but rather, if GOD ſhall be pleaſed to make me, to reach your hearts, I will tell you, by the word "righteouſneſs," I underſtand all that CHRIST hath done, and all that CHRIST hath ſuffered: or, to make uſe of the term generally made uſe of by ſound divines, "CHRIST's active, and CHRIST's paſſive obedience;" put theſe two together, and they make up the righteouſneſs of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. My dear friends, thus ſtood the caſe between GOD and man: at firſt GOD made man upright. *Moſes* gives us a ſhort, but never was ſo full a deſcription of the origin and nature of man given by any other but himſelf. "In the image of GOD made he man, ſays that ſacred hiſtorian, being inſpired by the Spirit of GOD. GOD ſaid, and it was done; GOD commanded, and the world aroſe before him; "Let there be light," and inſtantaneouſly behold light appeared: but when that lovely, that divine, that bleſſed creature Man, the Lord of the creation, GOD's vicegerent, was to be made, GOD calls a council, and ſays, "Let us make man after our own image." Now, this image is to be underſtood, no doubt, in reſpect of man's ſoul; for GOD being no corporeal ſubſtance, man could not be made after his image

that

that way. Well, in this condition GOD made man. *Adam* ſtood as our repreſentative. *Adam* and *Eve* had but one name originally, "GOD made man, and called their name *Adam*. GOD left *Adam* to his own free will; he was pleaſed to enter into a covenant with him, which, indeed, is an amazing inſtance of GOD's condeſcenſion. GOD might have ordered man to do ſo and ſo, and not made him any promiſe of a reward: but the great Creator was pleaſed to promiſe him, that if he performed an unſinning obedience, if he abſtained from eating a particular tree, that he and his poſterity ſhould live for ever; but if he broke that command, in the day that he ate thereof, he and all his poſterity were to die. Now, I verily believe, had you and I been there preſent; however ſome people may object againſt GOD's ſeverity, in imputing *Adam*'s ſin to us; yet I believe, if you and I, and all the world had been preſent, we ſhould have heartily come into this agreement. Suppoſing GOD had called the whole creation together, and had ſaid, "Ye, my creatures, I have made here a man after my own image, I have breathed into him the breath of life, I have cauſed him to become a living ſoul; I have filled him with righteouſneſs and true holineſs; he has not the leaſt propenſity to ſin, only he is a fallible and mutable creature; all that I deſire of this man is, that he abſtain from yonder tree: I have given to him all the trees of the garden, I have made him, and planted for him a garden with mine own right hand, I deſire he may abſtain from plucking yonder fruit: Will ye ſtand or fall by this man, will ye let him be your repreſentative, will ye be content that his obedience or diſobedience be imputed to you?" If we had been all there, every one of us would have ſaid, "LORD GOD, we will let "him be our repreſentative;" the terms were ſo eaſy, the improbability of his falling was ſo exceeding great, that I believe every one of us ſhould have all put our hand to the covenant. And ſuppoſing us alive, and that we had agreed to that covenant, who is that man or woman that could find fault with GOD's imputing *Adam*'s ſin to us. Well, my friends, GOD made man in this condition; the devil envied his happineſs; it is ſuppoſed by ſome, that man was made to ſupply the places of the fallen angels. But the devil envied man, and had leave to tempt him; *Eve* ſoon reached

out her hand and plucked of the forbidden fruit, and afterwards *Adam* tranſgreſſed alſo; and from that very moment, to make uſe of Mr. *Boſton*'s words, "Man's name was *Ichabod*," the glory of the LORD departed from him. *Adam* and *Eve* then fell: you, and I, and all their poſterity (whom they repreſented) fell in them. Mankind had but one neck; and GOD might have ſerved mankind, as *Caligula* would have ſerved *Rome*, according to his own words, "I wiſh it had but "one neck, and I would cut it off with one blow." GOD, if he pleaſed, might have ſent us all to hell. Here *Calvin* repreſents GOD's attributes as ſtruggling one with another; Juſtice ſaying to GOD, ſeeing Juſtice had framed the ſanction, "Is the law broken, damn the offender, and ſend him to hell." The mercy of GOD, his darling attribute, cries out, "Spare him, ſpare him." The wiſdom of GOD contrives a way, that juſtice might be ſatisfied, and yet mercy be triumphant ſtill. How was that? The LORD JESUS interpoſes, the days-man, the dear Redeemer! he ſaw GOD wielding his flaming ſword, and his hand taking hold of vengeance; the LORD JESUS CHRIST ſaw the ſword ready to be ſheathed in the blood of the offender; when no eye could pity, when no angel or archangel could reſcue, juſt as GOD was, as it were, about to give the fatal blow, juſt as the knife was put to the throat of the offender, the Son of GOD, the eternal Logos, ſays, "Father, ſpare the ſinner; let him not die; Father, Father, O hold thy hand, withdraw thy ſword, for I come to do thy will; man has broken thy law, and violated thy covenant: I do not deny but man deſerves to be damned for ever; but, Father, what *Adam* could not do, if thou wilt prepare me a body, I in the fulneſs of time will go, and die for him; he has broken thy law, but I will go and keep it, that thy law may be honoured; I will give a perfect unſinning obedience to all thy commandments; and that thou mayſt juſtify ungodly creatures, I will not only go down and obey thy law, but I will go down and bleed; I will go down and die: here I am; I will will ſtep in between thee and ſinners, and be glad to have thy ſword ſheathed in my heart's blood for them."

In the fulneſs of time deſcends the eternal Logos, "In the fulneſs of time GOD ſent forth his Son made of a woman, made

made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law from the curſe of it, being made a curſe for us." The LORD JESUS CHRIST being cloathed in human nature, fulfilled all righteouſneſs; he ſubmitted to every inſtitution of GOD, and was pleaſed to obey the whole moral law; and afterwards, O can we think of it, O can you hear of it, without a heart leaping with joy, at laſt the LORD JESUS bled and died! and when he was juſt expiring, juſt as he was about to bow down his head, and give up the ghoſt, what do ye think he ſaid? He ſaid, "It is finiſhed!" As much as to ſay, "Now the arduous work, the difficult taſk I had undertaken, bleſſed be GOD, is now completely over; all the demands of the law are finiſhed; now GOD's juſtice is ſatisfied; now a new and living way is opened by my blood to the holieſt of all for poor ſinners."

So that when CHRIST's righteouſneſs is here ſpoken of, we are to underſtand "CHRIST's obedience and death," all that CHRIST has done, and all that CHRIST has ſuffered for an elect world, for all that will believe on him. And bleſſed be GOD for this righteouſneſs! bleſſed be GOD for the epithet which in the text is put to this righteouſneſs; it might be called a *bleſſed* righteouſneſs, it might be called a *glorious* righteouſneſs, it might be called an *invaluable* righteouſneſs; but the angel calls it an *everlaſting righteouſneſs*: GOD give you to take the comfort of it!

Secondly, I am now to ſhew, on what account, this righteouſneſs is here called an *everlaſting* righteouſneſs; and pray why do you think is CHRIST's righteouſneſs called an everlaſting righteouſneſs?

I ſuppoſe it is called an everlaſting righteouſneſs,

Firſt, Becauſe CHRIST's righteouſneſs was intended by the great GOD to extend to mankind even from eternity. All of you know, that old love is the beſt love. When we have an old acquaintance, a friend, that has loved us for many years, indeed that love is ſweet: though we may love new friends, yet when an old friend and a new friend meet together, we may ſay, that the old is better. Now this ſhould endear GOD to us, to think that from all the ages of eternity GOD had thoughts of you; GOD intended the LORD JESUS CHRIST to ſave your ſouls and mine: hence it is, that GOD, to endear *Jeremiah* to him, tells him, I have loved thee

with an everlaſting love. Hence it is, that the LORD JESUS, when he calls his elect people up to heaven, ſays, "Come, ye bleſſed of my Father;" what follows? "receive the kingdom prepared for you;" how long? "from the foundation of the world." All that we receive in time; all the ſtreams that come to our ſouls, are but ſo many ſtreams flowing from that inexhauſtible fountain, GOD's electing, GOD's ſovereign, GOD's diſtinguiſhing, GOD's everlaſting love; and, therefore, the righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST may properly be called an everlaſting righteouſneſs, becauſe GOD intended it from everlaſting.

Secondly, It is called an everlaſting righteouſneſs, becauſe the efficacy of CHRIST's death took place immediately upon *Adam*'s fall. Chriſtianity, in one ſenſe, is as old as the creation. Great Profeſſor *Franck*, of *Germany*, ſays, "That "CHRIST is the ſum and ſubſtance of all righteouſneſs." Mr. *Henry* obſerves, "That the LORD JESUS CHRIST is the "treaſure hid in the field of the Old Teſtament, under the "types and ſhadows of the *Moſaic* diſpenſation." We have the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhining in his full meridian in the New Teſtament diſpenſation. Now the righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST, may be called an everlaſting righteouſneſs, becauſe all the ſaints that have been ſaved, or that ever will be ſaved, are all ſaved by the righteouſneſs of CHRIST. A great many cenſorious people are mighty inquiſitive to know, what will become of the heathens, that never heard of JESUS CHRIST. I would ſay to ſuch perſons, as the LORD JESUS CHRIST did to another curious enquirer, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." Pray, for what ſhould you and I trouble ourſelves about the heathens? Are not we heathens? It is too true, that we have too much of the heathens temper and practice with us. But why ſhould we loſe our time in enquiring about what will become of the heathen, and not rather enquire what will become of our own ſouls? We may be ſure GOD will deal with heathens according to their light: if he has given them no revelation, they will not be judged by a revelation; if they have not had a law, they will be judged without law. But as for the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who have the goſpel revealed to them, however Deiſts may argue contrary to it; however they may ſet up reaſon in oppoſition to

divine

divine revelation; we may be ſure none were ever ſaved, or will be ſaved, but by the righteouſneſs of CHRIST. It was through faith in him, that *Abel* was ſaved; it was through the ſacrifice of JESUS CHRIST, that *Abraham* was accepted, and that all the prophets of old were accepted; and there is none other name given under heaven, whereby we can be ſaved, but that of CHRIST. And therefore, ſince perſons under the law, and under the goſpel, are to be ſaved only through CHRIST; therefore, CHRIST's righteouſneſs may properly be called an everlaſting righteouſneſs. But this is not all.

Thirdly, The righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST, is not only to be called an everlaſting righteouſneſs, becauſe that all perſons under the law, and all perſons under the goſpel, are ſaved by it; but becauſe the efficacy thereof, bleſſed be GOD for it! is to continue till time ſhall be no more. Bleſſed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST! the efficacy of whoſe blood, death, and atonement, is as great and as effectual now to the ſalvation of poor ſinners, as when he bowed his bleſſed head, and gave up the ghoſt: "JESUS CHRIST is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever;" and whoſoever believes on him now, whoſoever comes to, and accepts of him, ſhall now ſee his power, ſhall taſte of his grace, and ſhall be actually ſaved by him, the ſame as if he had been in company with thoſe who ſaw him expiring.

Fourthly, CHRIST's righteouſneſs may be called an everlaſting righteouſneſs, becauſe the benefit of it is to endure to everlaſting life. Indeed, ſome people tell us, that a perſon may be in CHRIST to-day, and go to the devil to-morrow: but, bleſſed be GOD, ye have not ſo learned CHRIST! No, my dear friends, thanks be to GOD for that divine text, "There is now no condemnation to them that are in CHRIST JESUS." Though GOD's people may fall foully; and though many are full of doubts and fears, and ſay, "One day I ſhall fall by the hands of *Saul*;" however ye may ſay in your haſte, "All men are liars;" however your poor ſouls may be haraſſed, yet no wicked devil, nor your own depraved heart, ſhall be able to ſeparate you from the love of GOD: GOD has loved you, GOD has fixed his heart upon you, and having loved his own, he loves them unto the end. The LORD of life and of glory, the bleſſed JESUS, will never ceaſe

loving you, till he hath loved and brought you to heaven; when he will rejoice, and ſay, "Behold me, O my Father, and the dear children that thou haſt given me; thou gaveſt them me; thine they were, I have bought them with my blood, I have won them with my ſword and with my bow, and I now will wear them as ſo many jewels of my crown." Therefore, JESUS CHRIST's righteouſneſs may be called an everlaſting righteouſneſs, becauſe thoſe who once take hold of, and are intereſted in it, ſhall be ſaved everlaſtingly by CHRIST; "It is GOD that juſtifies us, (ſays St. *Paul*) who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died, yea rather that is riſen again." He gives devils the challenge, "O death, where is thy ſting, O grave, where is thy victory? Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of GOD? I am perſuaded that neither death nor life, neither principalities nor powers, nor any other creature, ſhall ever be able to ſeperate us from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD." Thoſe whom GOD juſtifies, he alſo glorifies. And becauſe CHRIST lives, bleſſed be GOD, we ſhall live alſo. I know not what you may ſay; but though I truſt I have felt the grace of CHRIST, yet I find that I have as much need to come to CHRIST every day for freſh ſtrength, as if I had never believed before: and if I was to depend upon my own faithfulneſs, and not the faithfulneſs of the Son of GOD, I am ſure I ſhould ſoon deſert the LORD JESUS CHRIST. But glory be to GOD, he is faithful that hath promiſed! Glory be to GOD, our ſalvation depends not upon our own free will, but upon GOD's free grace! Here is a ſure bottom; the believer may build upon it; let the ſtorms blow as long and as high as they pleaſe, they may make the poor creature tremble, but bleſſed be GOD, they never ſhall be able to take him off the foundation; though they may ſhake him, they ſhall only ſhake off his corruption; and I believe all that fear GOD, will be glad to part with it. On all theſe accounts, CHRIST's righteouſneſs may be called an everlaſting righteouſneſs.

III. It is ſaid, in my text, that JESUS was to bring it in. What are we to underſtand by his bringing it in? Our LORD's promulgating and proclaiming it to the world. Indeed, it was brought in under the law; but then it was brought

brought in under types and ſhadows, and moſt of the *Jews* looked no further. But JESUS CHRIST brought life and immortality to light by the goſpel. The light of *Moſes* was only twilight; the light of the goſpel, is like the ſun at noon-day, ſhining in his full meridian. Therefore, JESUS CHRIST may be ſaid to bring in this everlaſting righteouſneſs, becauſe he proclaimed it to the world, and commanded it to be preached, that GOD ſent his Son into the world, that the world through him might be ſaved.

Again, The LORD JESUS CHRIST brought in this righteouſneſs, as he wrought it out for ſinners upon the croſs. Some Antinomians, for want of a proper diſtinction, run into a grievous error, telling us, Becauſe GOD intended to juſtify by the righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST, therefore man is juſtified from all eternity: which is abſurd: a perſon cannot be juſtified, till he is actually exiſting; therefore, though man is juſtified, as it lies in GOD's mind from all eternity, yet it was not actually brought in till the LORD JESUS CHRIST pronounced thoſe bleſſed words, "It is finiſhed;" the grand conſummation! then JESUS brought it in. A new and a living way was to be opened to the Holy of Holies, for poor ſinners, by the blood of CHRIST. But I do not think that the expreſſion, *brought in*, is to be limited to this ſenſe, though I ſuppoſe it is the primary one; it implies not only CHRIST's bringing it into the world, as promulgating, and having it written in the word of GOD, and as having wrought it out for ſinners in his life, and on the croſs; but he brings it in, in a manner, which, I pray GOD may take place this night; I mean, bringing it, by his bleſſed Spirit, into poor believers hearts. All that CHRIST hath done, all that CHRIST hath ſuffered, all CHRIST's active obedience, all CHRIST's paſſive obedience, will do us no good, unleſs by the Spirit of GOD, it is brought into our ſouls. As one expreſſes it, "An unapplied CHRIST is no CHRIST at all." To hear of a CHRIST dying for ſinners, will only increaſe your damnation, will only ſink you deeper into hell, unleſs we have ground to ſay, by a work of grace wrought in our hearts, that the LORD JESUS hath brought this home to us. Hence it is, that the Apoſtle, ſpeaking of CHRIST, ſays, "Who loved me, and gave himſelf for me." O that dear,

that great, that little, but important word, *me*. Happy they, who can adopt the Apoſtle's language! Happy they that can apply it to their own heart; and when they hear that CHRIST has brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, can ſay, Bleſſed be GOD, it is brought in by the bleſſed Spirit to my ſoul!

Are there any here that can go along with me on this doctrine? But why do I aſk this queſtion, when preaching to numbers, who, I hope, have taſted of the grace of GOD long ago? I do not know, I cannot diſtinguiſh you; you are juſt like other people, as to your looks and habits; but if I do not, and if your neighbours cannot know you, that great GOD, in whoſe preſence you are, knows you; He, before whoſe tribunal we are ſhortly to appear, knows you. If CHRIST JESUS hath brought his everlaſting righteouſneſs into your heart; if it is applied by the Spirit of GOD to your ſoul, what ſhall I ſay to you? I will ſay as the Angel to *John*, "Come up hither," thou child of GOD! Come up hither, thou ſon, thou daughter of *Abraham!* Come and join with me, in calling upon angels and archangels, in calling upon the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, to help thee to praiſe that loving Redeemer, that has brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs. O was ever love like this! When *Abraham* was about to offer up his ſon, GOD ſaid, "Now I know that thou loveſt me, ſince thou haſt not withheld thy ſon, thine only ſon from me." Now may each child of GOD ſay, "Now, O GOD, I know that thou haſt loved me, ſince thou haſt not withheld thy Son, thy dear Son, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, from dying for me." If thou haſt got CHRIST brought into thy ſoul by faith, O look forward, look towards a happy eternity; O look towards thoſe everlaſting manſions, into which GOD will bring thee after death. My dear friends, I could ſay much from this text to comfort GOD's people: But

I muſt addreſs myſelf to you, poor ſouls, who cannot ſay, that this righteouſneſs has been brought home to your ſouls; but if it was never brought home before, may GOD, for the LORD JESUS CHRIST's ſake, bring it home now! Are any of you depending upon a righteouſneſs of your own? Do any of you here, think to ſave yourſelves by your own doings? I ſay to you, as the Apoſtle ſaid to one that offered money for a power to confer the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, your righteouſneſs

neſs ſhall periſh with you. Poor miſerable creatures! What is there in your tears? what in your prayers? what in your performances, to appeaſe the wrath of an angry GOD? Away from the trees of the garden; come, ye guilty wretches, come as poor, loſt, undone, and wretched creatures, and accept of a better righteouſneſs than your own. As I ſaid before, ſo I tell you again, the righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST is an everlaſting righteouſneſs: it is wrought out for the very chief of ſinners. Ho, every one that thirſteth, let him come and drink of this water of life freely. Are any of you wounded by ſin? Do any of you feel you have no righteouſneſs of your own? Are any of you periſhing for hunger? Are any of you afraid ye will periſh for ever? Come, dear ſouls, in all your rags; come, thou poor man; come, thou poor, diſtreſſed woman; you, who think GOD will never forgive you, and that your ſins are too great to be forgiven; come, thou doubting creature, who art afraid thou wilt never get comfort; ariſe, take comfort, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the LORD of life, the LORD of glory, calls for thee: through his righteouſneſs there is hope for the chief of ſinners, for the worſt of creatures. What if thou hadſt committed all the ſins in the world? What if thou hadſt committed the ſins of a thouſand, what if thou hadſt committed the ſins of a million of worlds? CHRIST's righteouſneſs will cover, the blood of the LORD JESUS CHRIST will cleanſe, thee from the guilt of them all. O let not one poor ſoul ſtand at a diſtance from the Saviour. My dear friends, could my voice hold out, was my ſtrength equal to my will, I would wreſtle with you; I would ſtrive with arguments, till you came and waſhed in this blood of the Lamb; till you came and accepted of this everlaſting righteouſneſs. O come, come! Now, ſince it is brought into the world by CHRIST, ſo in the name, in the ſtrength, and by the aſſiſtance of the great GOD, I bring it now to the pulpit; I now offer this righteouſneſs, this free, this imputed, this everlaſting righteouſneſs to all poor ſinners that will accept of it. For GOD's ſake accept it this night: you do not know but ye may die before to-morrow. How do ye know, but while I am ſpeaking, a fit of the apoplexy may ſeize, and death arreſt you? O my dear friends, where can ye go? where will ye appear? How will ye ſtand before an angry

GOD,

God, without the righteouſneſs of the Lord Jesus Christ put upon your ſouls? Can ye ſtand in your own rags? Will ye dare to appear before a heart-ſearching God, without the apparel of your elder brother? If ye do, I know your doom: Christ will frown you into hell: "Depart, depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire," ſhall be your portion. Think, I pray you, therefore, on theſe things; go home, go home, go home, pray over the text, and ſay, "Lord God, thou haſt brought an everlaſting righteouſneſs into the world by the Lord Jesus Christ; by the bleſſed Spirit bring it into my heart!" then, die when ye will, ye are ſafe; if it be to-morrow, ye ſhall be immediately tranſlated into the preſence of the everlaſting God: that will be ſweet! Happy they who have got this robe on; happy they that can ſay, "My God hath loved me, and I ſhall be loved by him with an everlaſting love!" That every one of you may be able to ſay ſo, may God grant, for the ſake of Jesus Christ, the dear Redeemer; to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON

SERMON XVI.

The Obſervation of the Birth of CHRIST, the Duty of all Chriſtians; or the true Way of keeping Chriſtmas.

MATTHEW i. 21.

And ſhe ſhall bring forth a Son, and thou ſhalt call his Name Jeſus: For he ſhall ſave his People from their Sins.

THE celebration of the birth of CHRIST hath been eſteemed a duty by moſt who profeſs chriſtianity. When we conſider the condeſcenſion and love of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in ſubmitting to be born of a virgin, a poor ſinful creature; and eſpecially as he knew how he was to be treated in this world; that he was to be deſpiſed, ſcoffed at, and at laſt to die a painful, ſhameful, and ignominious death; that he ſhould be treated as though he was the off-ſcouring of all mankind; uſed, not like the ſon of a man, and, therefore, not at all like the Son of GOD; the conſideration of theſe things ſhould make us to admire the love of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who was ſo willing to offer himſelf as a ranſom for the ſins of the people, that when the fulneſs of time was come, CHRIST came, made of a woman, made under the law: he came according to the eternal counſel of the Father; he came, not in glory or in ſplendor, not like him who brought all ſalvation with him: no, he was born in a ſtable, and laid in a manger; oxen were his companions. O amazing condeſcenſion of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, to ſtoop to ſuch low and

poor

poor things for our ſake. What love is this, what great and wonderful love was here, that the Son of GOD ſhould come into our world in ſo mean a condition, to deliver us from the ſin and miſery in which we were involved by our fall in our firſt parents! And as all that proceeded from the ſprings muſt be muddy, becauſe the fountain was ſo, the LORD JESUS CHRIST came to take our natures upon him, to die a ſhameful, a painful, and an accurſed death for our ſakes; he died for our ſins, and to bring us to GOD; he cleanſed us by his blood from the guilt of ſin, he ſatisfied for our imperfections; and now, my brethren, we have acceſs unto him with boldneſs; he is a mediator between us and his offended Father.

Therefore, if we do but conſider into what ſtate, and at how great a diſtance from GOD we are fallen; how vile our natures were; what a depravity, and how incapable to reſtore that image of GOD to our ſouls, which we loſt in our firſt parents: when I conſider theſe things, my brethren, and that the LORD JESUS CHRIST came to reſtore us to that favour with GOD which we had loſt, and that CHRIST not only came down with an intent to do it, but actually accompliſhed all that was in his heart towards us; that he raiſed and brought us into favour with GOD, that we might find kindneſs and mercy in his ſight; ſurely this calls for ſome return of thanks on our part to our dear Redeemer, for this love and kindneſs to our ſouls. How juſt would it have been of him, to have left us in that deplorable ſtate wherein we, by our guilt, had involved ourſelves? For GOD could not, nor can receive any additional good by our ſalvation; but it was love, mere love; it was free love that brought the LORD JESUS CHRIST into our world about 1700 years ago. What, ſhall we not remember the birth of our JESUS? Shall we yearly celebrate the birth of our temporal king, and ſhall that of the King of kings be quite forgotten? Shall that only, which ought to be had chiefly in remembrance, be quite forgotten? GOD forbid! No, my dear brethren, let us celebrate and keep this feſtival of our church, with joy in our hearts: let the birth of a Redeemer, which redeemed us from ſin, from wrath, from death, from hell, be always remembered; may this Saviour's love never be forgotten! but may we ſing forth all his love and glory as long as life ſhall laſt here, and through an endleſs

ndleſs eternity in the world above! may we chaunt forth he wonders of redeeming love, and the riches of free grace, midſt angels and archangels, cherubim and ſeraphim, without intermiſſion, for ever and ever! And as, my brethren, the time for keeping this feſtival is approaching, let us conſider our duty in the true obſervation thereof, or the right way for the glory of GOD, and the good of immortal ſouls, to celebrate the birth of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; an event which ought to be had in eternal remembrance.

It is my deſign to lay down rules for the true keeping of that time of *Chriſtmas*, which is now approaching.

I. I ſhall ſhew you when you may be ſaid, not to obſerve this feſtival aright.

II. I ſhall ſhew you, when your obſervation and celebrating of this feſtival is done according to the glory of GOD, and to the true manner of keeping of it.

III. Shall conclude with an exhortation to all of you, high and low, rich and poor, one with another, to have a regard to your behaviour at all times, but more eſpecially, my dear brethren, on this ſolemn occaſion.

I. My brethren, I am to ſhew when your celebration of this feſtival is not of the right kind.

And *Firſt*, you do not celebrate this aright, when you ſpend moſt of your time in cards, dice, or gaming of any ſort.

This is a ſeaſon, for which there is no more allowance for waſting of your precious time in thoſe unlawful entertainments, than any other. Perſons are apt to flatter themſelves that they are free and at liberty to ſpend whole evenings now at cards, at dice, or any diverſion whatſoever, to paſs away, as they call it, a tedious evening. They can do any thing now to paſs away that, which is haſtening as faſt as thought: time is always upon the wing; it is no ſooner preſent but it is paſt, and no ſooner come but it is gone. And have we ſo much to do, and ſo little time to do it in, and yet complain of time lying heavy upon our hands? Have we not the devil and the beaſt to get out of our ſouls? Are not our natures to be changed, our corruptions to be ſubdued, our wills to be brought

brought over to GOD, our hard hearts to be ſoftened, all old things to be done away, and all things to become new in our ſouls? Is there not all this to be done? And yet we have too much time upon our hands! It is well, that inſtead of having too much time, it be not found that we have got too little, when we come to die: then we ſhall wiſh, my brethren, that we had made more account of our time, that we had improved it for the glory of GOD, and the welfare of our immortal ſouls.

Good GOD! how amazing is the conſideration, that many can go to church in the morning, and take the Sacrament, and come home and ſpend the afternoon and evening in cards! Is this, my brethren, diſcerning the LORD's body? Is this taking the ſacrament according to its inſtitution? Is not this a pollution thereof, and making the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.

Therefore, thoſe of you who have made this your practice in times paſt, let me beſeech you, in the bowels of mercy, not to do ſo any more; for, indeed, it is earthly, it is ſenſual, it is deviliſh. Conſider what is ſaid of thoſe who eat and drink at the LORD's table unworthily, that they eat and drink their own damnation: And can they, my brethren, be ſaid to eat and drink any otherwiſe, who no ſooner go from the table of the LORD, but run to the diverſions of the devil? Indeed this is exceeding ſinful, and diſpleaſing unto the LORD; then forbear thoſe diverſions which are ſo evil in themſelves: O be not found in thoſe exerciſes, and in that pleaſure, which you would not be found in when you come to die. Thus, my brethren, you ſee it is not a right celebration of the birth of the LORD JESUS, to ſpend it in cards, dice, or any other diverſions, which proceed ſo directly from the devil, and are deſtructive to all true goodneſs.

Secondly, They cannot be ſaid truly to celebrate this time, who ſpend their time in eating and drinking to exceſs.

This is a ſeaſon when perſons are apt to indulge themſelves in all manner of luxury: iniquity now abounds apace; nothing is ſcarcely to be ſeen but things of the greateſt extravagance imaginable; not only for the neceſſities of the body, but to pamper it in luſt, to feed its vices, to make us go on in ſin, to be a means for gratifying our carnal appetite; and

this

this is a means to make us forget the LORD of glory. This makes us only fit to do ſuch drudgery, as the devil ſhall ſet us about; this is only preparing to run whereſoever the devil ſends: this, inſtead of denying ourſelves, is indulging ourſelves; this is not, nor cannot be called, a celebration of the birth of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, when we are making ourſelves worſe than the beaſts that periſh.

I am not ſpeaking againſt eating and drinking of the good things of life, but againſt the eating and drinking of them to excels, becauſe, thus they unqualify us for the ſervice of GOD; and to our fellow-creatures they make us unſociable, and may occaſion us to be guilty of ſaying and acting thoſe things, which we ſhould be aſhamed to think of, if we had only eat or drank with moderation.

Therefore, my dear brethren, let me beſeech you to ſet a watch over yourſelves; be careful that you do not run into that company which may tempt you to evil; for would a man run himſelf into danger on purpoſe? Would a man enter himſelf into that company, where, before he goes, he knows he ſhall be expoſed to great temptations; and therefore, if you have any reaſon to think that the company you are going into will be a temptation, I beſeech you, by the mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, that you would not run into it.

How can you ſay, "Lead us not into temptation," when you are reſolved to lead yourſelves into it, by running into the occaſions of ſins. You are commanded to keep from the appearance of evil; and do you do that, by running into the place and company where it is like to be committed? No, this is ſo far from avoiding, and ſhunning it, that it is a plain proof to the contrary; therefore, if you are for obſerving this time, this feſtival of our church, let it not be done by running to exceſs; for you plainly ſee, that thoſe who are guilty thereof, cannot be ſaid properly to celebrate it.

Thirdly, Nor can they, my brethren, be ſaid to keep, or rightly obſerve the commemoration of the birth of our Redeemer, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who neglect their worldly callings to follow pleaſures and diverſions.

Alas! many, inſtead of keeping this time as it ought to be, run into ſin with greedineſs; inſtead of devoting their time

to the LORD, it is only devoted to the devil and their own luſts. How many who thus miſpend their time, at this ſeaſon, lay by the work of their callings for a conſiderable time, with no other view, but to follow earthly, ſenſual, and deviliſh pleaſures. If they ſhould go to hear a ſermon, or to a ſociety, my brethren, the mouths of all the *Phariſees* at once are open againſt them, that they are not only a going to be ruined themſelves, but are going to ruin their families too; they think it needleſs to make ſo much ado; this is being *righteous over-much*; but you may be as wicked as you pleaſe, and they will not cry out; however, when you are *wicked over-much*, by ſerving the devil and your own pleaſures for a week or a month together, then, my brethren, with them you are only taking a little recreation, ſpending your time in innocent diverſions; no one cries out againſt you, there is no outcry that you are going to be ruined. Again, if you give never ſo ſmall a matter among the poor people of GOD, for their relief, then you are robbing your families, then you are going to turn madmen, and in a few days will be ſo methodiſtically mad, that you are not fit for a polite gentleman's converſation; but if you ſpend one hundred times the money in playhouſes, &c. on your luſts and pleaſures, then you are liked and eſteemed as a good friend and companion; but, my dear brethren, theſe good companions in the world's account, are never ſo in the LORD JESUS CHRIST's. You cannot ſerve GOD and mammon; you muſt either loſe your luſts, your pleaſures, and your delights, or you cannot expect to find favour with GOD; for indeed, and indeed, the ways that too many follow at this time, are ſinful, yea, they are exceeding ſinful. You ſee they cannot be ſaid to celebrate this holy time, who thus miſpend their precious time to the neglect of their families; ſuch are deſtroying themſelves with a witneſs.

Thus, my dear brethren, I have ſhewn you who they are who do not rightly obſerve this holy feſtival.

II. I come now, in the ſecond place, to ſhew you, who they are who do rightly obſerve, and truly celebrate the birth of our Redeemer.

And I ſhall ſhew you who they are in two particulars, directly oppoſite to the others; and then, my brethren, take

your

your choice: you muſt chooſe the one or the other, there is no medium, you muſt either ſerve the LORD or Baal; and, therefore, my dear brethren, let me beg of you to conſider,

Firſt, That thoſe ſpend their time aright, and truly obſerve this feſtival, who ſpend their hours in reading, praying, and religious converſation.

What can we do to employ our time to a more noble purpoſe, than reading of what our dear Redeemer has done and ſuffered; to read, that the King of kings, and the LORD of lords, came from his throne and took upon him the form of the meaneſt of his ſervants; and what great thnigs he underwent. This, this is an hiſtory worth reading, this is worth employing our time about: and ſurely, when we read of the ſufferings of our Saviour, it ſhould excite us to prayer, that we might have an intereſt in the LORD JESUS CHRIST; that the blood which he ſpilt upon mount *Calvary*, and his death and crucifixion, might make an atonement for our ſins, that we might be made holy; that we might be enabled to put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, even the LORD JESUS CHRIST; that we may throw away the heavy yoke of ſin, and put on the yoke of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Indeed, my brethren, theſe things call for prayer, and for earneſt prayer too; and O do be earneſt with GOD, that you may have an intereſt in this Redeemer, and that you may put on his righteouſneſs, ſo that you may not come before him in your filthy rags, nor be found not having on the wedding garment. O do not, I beſeech you, truſt unto yourſelves for juſtification; you cannot, indeed, you cannot be juſtified by the works of the law. I intreat that your time may be thus ſpent; and if you are in company, let your time be ſpent in that converſation which profiteth: let it not be about your dreſſing, your plays, your profits, or your worldly concerns, but let it be the wonders of redeeming love: O tell, tell to each other, what great things the LORD has done for your ſouls; declare unto one another, how you were delivered from the hands of your common enemy, *Satan*, and how the LORD has brought your feet from the clay, and has ſet them upon the rock of ages, the LORD JESUS CHRIST; there, my brethren, is no ſlipping; other converſation,

verſation, by often repeating, you become fully acquainted with, but of CHRIST there is always ſomething new to raiſe your thoughts; you can never want matter when the love of the LORD JESUS CHRIST is the ſubject: then let JESUS be the ſubject, my brethren, of all your converſation.

Let your time be ſpent on him: O this, this is an employ, which if you belong to JESUS, will laſt you to all eternity. Let others enjoy their cards, their dice, and gaming hours; do you, my brethren, let your time be ſpent in reading, praying, and religious converſation. Which will ſtand the trial beſt at the laſt day? which do you think will bring moſt comfort, moſt peace, in a dying hour? O live and ſpend your time now, as you will wiſh to have done, when you come to die.

Secondly, Let the good things of life, you enjoy, be uſed with moderation.

I am not, as the ſcoffers of this day tell you, againſt eating and drinking the good things of life; no, my brethren, I am only againſt their being uſed to an exceſs; therefore, let me beſeech you to avoid thoſe great indiſcretions, thoſe ſinful actions, which will give the enemies of GOD room to blaſpheme. Let me beſeech you, to have a regard, a particular regard to your behaviour, at this time; for indeed the eyes of all are upon you, and they would rejoice much to find any reaſon to complain of you. They can ſay things againſt us without a cauſe; and how would they rejoice if there was wherewith they might blame us? Then they would triumph and rejoice indeed; and all your little ſlips, my dear brethren, are, and would be charged upon me. O at this time, when the eyes of ſo many are upon you, be upon your guard; and if you uſe the good things of this life with moderation, you do then celebrate this feſtival in the manner which the inſtitution calls for.

And inſtead of running into exceſs, let that money, which you might expend to pamper your own bodies, be given to feed the poor; now, my brethren, is the ſeaſon, in which they commonly require relief; and ſure you cannot act more agreeable, either to the ſeaſon, to the time, or for the glory of GOD, than in relieving his poor diſtreſſed ſervants. There-

fore,

ore, if any of you have poor friends, or acquaintance, who are in diſtreſs, I beſeech you to aſſiſt them; and not only thoſe of your acquaintance, but the poor in general. O my dear brethren, that will turn to a better account another day, than all you have expended to pleaſe the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, or the pride of life. Conſider, CHRIST was always willing to relieve the diſtreſſed; it is his command alſo; and can you better commemorate the birth of your king, your Saviour, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, than in obeying one of his commands?

Do not, my dear brethren, be forgetful of the poor of this world; conſider, if providence has ſmiled upon you, and bleſſed you with abundance of the things of this life, GOD calls for ſome returns of gratitude from you: be ye mindful of the poor, and when you are ſo, then you may be ſaid to have a true regard for that time which is now approaching; if you would truly obſerve this feſtival, let it be done with moderation, and a regard to the poor of this world.

Thirdly, Let me beg of you not to alienate too much of your time from the worldly buſineſs of this life, but have a proper regard thereunto, and then you may be ſaid rightly to obſerve this feſtival.

GOD allows none to be idle: in all ages buſineſs was commended; and therefore do not think that any ſeaſon will excuſe us in our callings: we are not, my brethren, to labour for the things of this life inordinately, but we are to labour for them with all moderation: we are not to neglect our callings; no, we are to regard thoſe places and ſtations of life, which GOD in his providence has thought convenient for us; and therefore, when you neglect your buſineſs to the hurt of your families, whatever pretence you thereby make for ſo doing, you are guilty of ſin; you are not acting according to the doctrine of the goſpel, but are breaking the commands of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, both according to his word, and to his own practice.

At this feſtival, perſons are apt to take a little more liberty than uſual; and if that time from our vocations is not prejudicial to ourſelves or families, and is ſpent in the ſervice of GOD, and the good of immortal ſouls, then I do not

think it ſinful; but there is too much reaſon to fear, that the time is ſpent upon our own luſts, and then it is exceeding ſinful, it is againſt our own ſouls, and it is againſt the good of our families, and inſtead of commemorating the birth of our dear Redeemer, we are diſhonouring him in the greateſt degree poſſibly we can.

Therefore, enquire ſtrictly into your end and deſign in ſpending your time; ſee, my brethren, whether it proceeds from a true love to your Redeemer, or whether there is not ſome worldly pleaſure or advantage at the bottom: if there is, our end is not right; but if it proceed intirely from love to him that died, and gave himſelf for us, our actions will be a proof thereof; then our time will be ſpent, not in the polite pleaſures of life, but according to the doctrines and commands of the bleſſed JESUS; then our converſation will be in heaven: and O that this might be found to be the end of each of you, who now hear me; then we ſhould truly obſerve this feſtival, and have a true regard to the occaſion thereof, that of CHRIST's coming to redeem the ſouls of thoſe which were loſt.

Let me now conclude, my dear brethren, with a few words of exhortation, beſeeching you to think of the love of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Did JESUS come into the world to ſave us from death, and ſhall we ſpend no part of our time in converſing about our dear JESUS; ſhall we pay no regard to the birth of him, who came to redeem us from the worſt of ſlavery, from that of ſin, and the devil; and ſhall this JESUS not only be born on our account, but likewiſe die in our ſtead, and yet ſhall we be unmindful of him? Shall we ſpend our time in thoſe things which are offenſive to him? Shall we not rather do all we can to promote his glory, and act according to his commands? O my dear brethren, be found in the ways of GOD; let us not diſturb our dear Redeemer by any irregular proceedings; and let me beſeech you to ſtrive to love, fear, honour and obey him, more than ever you have done yet; let not the devil engroſs your time, and that dear Saviour who came into the world on your accounts, have ſo little. O be not ſo ungrateful to him who has been ſo kind to you: What could the LORD

JESUS

ıus Christ have done for you more than he has? Then not abuſe his mercy, but let your time be ſpent in think- ; and talking of the love of Jesus, who was incarnate for , who was born of a woman, and made under the law, to leem us from the wrath to come.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, &c.

SERMON XVII.

The Temptation of CHRIST.

MATTHEW iv. 1—11.

Then was JESUS *led up of the ſpirit into the wilderneſs, to be tempted of the devil. And when he had faſted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he ſaid, If thou be the Son of* GOD, *command that theſe ſtones may be made bread. But he anſwered and ſaid, It is written, Man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of* GOD. *Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and ſetteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and ſaith unto him, If thou be the Son of* GOD, *caſt thyſelf down: for it is written, He ſhall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they ſhall bear thee up, leſt at any time thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone.* JESUS *ſaid unto him, It is written again, Thou ſhalt not tempt the* LORD *thy* GOD. *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and ſheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them: and ſaith unto him, All theſe things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me. Then ſaith* JESUS *unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the* LORD *thy* GOD, *and him only ſhalt thou ſerve. Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and miniſtered unto him.*

DEARLY beloved, to-day you are invited to take a walk into the wilderneſs, to behold, ſympathize with, and get inſtruction and comfort from a Saviour tempted. In the conflict, he approves himſelf to be GOD's beloved Son; and the Father gives demonſtrable evidence, that with, and in him, he is indeed well pleaſed. Let us with ſerious attention conſider,

when,

hen, where, and how, our great *Michael* fought with and vercame the dragon. The Evangeliſt *Matthew* is very parıcular in relating the preparations for, the beginning, proceſs, nd iſſue of this glorious and important combat.

" Then was JESUS led up of the ſpirit into the wilderneſs, to be tempted of the devil." In the cloſe of the foregoing chapter we are told, that the bleſſed JESUS had been publicly baptized, and was alſo ſolemnly inaugurated to his mediatorial office, by the opening of the heavens, by the Spirit of GOD deſcending on him like a dove, and by a voice from heaven, ſaying, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed;" and then it was, when he came from the ſolemn ordinance of baptiſm; when he was about to ſhew himſelf openly unto *Iſrael*; when he was full of the Holy Ghoſt (*Luke* iv. 1.); even *then* was he led, with a holy unconſtrained violence, as a champion into the field, to engage an enemy, whom he was ſure to conquer. But whither is this conqueror led? Into a loneſome, wide, howling wilderneſs: probably, ſays Mr. *Henry*, into the great wilderneſs of *Sinai*; a wilderneſs, not only loneſome, but inhabited by wild beaſts. *Mark* i. 13. Hither was our LORD led, not nly that he might prepare himſelf by retirement and prayer, ut alſo that he might be alone, and thereby give Satan all he advantages he could deſire. In this combat, as well as hat of his laſt agony, " of the people, there was to be none with him." Neither does he content himſelf with praying, but he faſts alſo, and that " forty days and forty nights," (ver. 2.): as *Moſes* and *Elias* had done, many years before, it may be, in the very ſame place. All theſe faſts were miraculous; and therefore, though we are taught hereby, that faſting is a chriſtian duty, yet, to pretend, in an ordinary way, to imitate them, by faſting for ſo long a term together, is no doubt ſuperſtitious, preſumptuous, and ſinful: but few people, I believe, need ſuch a caution.

During theſe forty days, we may ſuppoſe, our LORD felt no hunger: converſe with heaven, to him was inſtead of meat and drink; but " afterwards he was an hungered;" exceedingly ſo, no doubt. And now, the important fight begins. For, then " the tempter," emphatically ſo called, becauſe he firſt tempted our firſt parents to ſin, and hath ever

ſince been unwearied in tempting their deſcendants; then the tempter, who in an inviſible manner had been attacking our bleſſed LORD all the whole forty days, when he ſaw him hungering, and in ſuch diſtreſſing circumſtances, came to him, as it ſhould ſeem, in a viſible ſhape, and probably transformed into the appearance of an angel of light. And what does he tempt him to? To nothing leſs, than to doubt of his being the Son of GOD." "If thou be the Son of GOD." What! put an *if* to this, Satan, after the glorious JESUS had been proved to be GOD's ſon, and repeatedly too in ſuch a glorious manner? Surely, thou thyſelf couldſt not but ſee the heavens opened, and the Spirit deſcending; ſurely, thou didſt hear the voice that came to him from heaven, immediately after his baptiſm, ſaying, "This is my beloved Son:" And doſt thou now ſay unto him, "If thou be the Son of GOD." Yes; but Satan knew, and believed he was full well; but he wanted to make our LORD to doubt of it. And why? Becauſe he was in ſuch a melancholy ſituation. As though he had ſaid, "If GOD was thy father, he would never ſuffer thee to ſtarve to death in a howling wilderneſs, among wild beaſts. Surely, the voice thou lately didſt hear, was only a deluſion. If thou waſt the Son of GOD, eſpecially his beloved Son, in whom he was ſo pleaſed, thou wouldſt be taken more care of by him." Thus he attacked our firſt parents, by ſuggeſting to them hard thoughts of their all-bountiful Creator: "Yea, hath GOD ſaid, Ye ſhall not eat of every tree in the garden?" "Hath he placed you amidſt ſuch a variety of delicious fruits, only to teaſe and make you miſerable?" And how artfully now does he labour to inſinuate himſelf into our LORD's affections, as he then did to ingratiate himſelf with our firſt parents. "If thou be the Son of GOD, ſays he, come, prove it, by commanding theſe ſtones (a heap of which, probably, lay very near) to be made bread: this will demonſtrate thy divinity, and relieve thy preſſing neceſſity at the ſame time." Thus, as in all his other temptations, Satan would fain appear to be his very kind friend, but the holy JESUS ſaw through the diſguiſed enemy of his antagoniſt; and ſcorning either to diſtruſt his [illegible] to work a miracle to [illegible] though he had the [illegible] of GOD without meaſure, and might have made uſe of a

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thouſand other ways, yet anſwers him with a text of ſcripture: "It is written, that man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD." This is a quotation from *Deuteronomy* viii. 3, and contains a reaſon given by the great GOD, why he choſe to feed the *Iſraelites* with manna; that they might learn thereby, man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD. This our bleſſed LORD here applies to himſelf; and his being in the wilderneſs, made the application of it ſtill more pertinent. *Iſrael* was GOD's ſon: out of *Egypt* was he called to ſojourn in the wilderneſs, where he was miraculouſly ſupported. And therefore our LORD, knowing that he was typified by this *Iſrael*, and that, like them, he was now in a wilderneſs, quotes this ſcripture as a reaſon why he ſhould not, at Satan's ſuggeſtion, either deſpair of receiving help from his Father in his preſent circumſtances, or diſtruſt the validity of his late manifeſtations, or make uſe of any unwarrantable means for his preſent relief. For as GOD was his father, he would, therefore, either in an ordinary way ſpread a table for him in the wilderneſs, or ſupport and ſuſtain him, as he did his *Iſrael* of old, in ſome extraordinary way or other without it: "For man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD."

Thus is the tempter foiled in the firſt onſet; but he hath other arrows in his quiver, with which he will farther ſtrive to wound the immaculate Lamb of GOD. Since he cannot draw him in either to diſtruſt, or deſpair, he will now try if he cannot prevail on him to preſume. In order to effect this, "He taketh the bleſſed JESUS up into the Holy City," or *Jeruſalem*, called by our Saviour, the city of the Great King, and here called holy, becauſe the holy temple was in it, and, we would hope, many holy people. This was a populous place, and therefore, would greatly befriend the devil's deſign. And not only ſo, but "he ſetteth him on a pinnacle," a battlement or wing, "of the temple," the top of which was ſo very high, that, as *Joſephus* obſerves, it would make a man's head run giddy to look down from it. And ſome think this was done at the time of public worſhip. How the holy JESUS ſuffered himſelf to be taken hither; whether he was tranſported through the air, or whether he followed Satan

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" cloud, ſuch as that great deceiver could eaſily frame and " put together, the glorious and ſplendid appearance of " princes, their robes and retinue, their equipage and life-" guards; the pomps of thrones and courts, and ſtately pa-" laces; the ſumptuous buildings in cities; the gardens and " fields about the country ſeats, with the various inſtances of " their wealth, pleaſure, and gaiety; ſo as might be moſt " likely to ſtrike the fancy, and excite the admiration and " affection. Such was this ſhew." Our Saviour very well knew it, only lets Satan go to the full length of his ſtring, that his victory over him might be the more illuſtrious. And now, ſays the devil, " All theſe things (a mighty all indeed; a mere imaginary bubble!) will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me. He would fain have it taken for granted, that he had ſucceeded in the two preceding temptations: " Come, thou ſeeſt thou art not the Son of GOD, or if thou art, thou ſeeſt what an unkind Father he is; thou art here in a ſtarving condition, therefore take my advice, diſown thy relation to him, ſet up for thyſelf, call me father, aſk of me bleſſings, and all theſe will I give thee; while all that I deſire in return, is but a bow, only fall down and worſhip me." Here Satan diſcovers himſelf with a witneſs: this was a deſperate parting ſtroke, indeed. It is now high time for thee, O thou enemy of ſouls, to be commanded to depart! Filled with a holy reſentment at ſuch helliſh treatment, and impatient of the very thought of ſetting up for himſelf, or alienating the leaſt part of his heart and affections from his Father, or dividing them between his GOD and the world; " Then ſaid JESUS unto him, Get thee hence, Satan, (I know thee who thou art, under all thy diſguiſes) get thee hence, thou grand adverſary; for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the LORD thy GOD, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve: this is the great commandment of the law; this is the commandment my Father gave unto his *Iſrael* of old, and wouldſt thou have me, who came to fulfil the law and the prophets, thus ſhamefully be a tranſgreſſor of it? Get thee hence, I will bear thy inſolence no longer: thy other temptations were helliſh, like thyſelf, but this intolerably ſo: get thee therefore hence, Satan: my heavenly Father is the LORD my GOD, and him only will I ſerve."

And

And now the battle is over: the important combat is ended: JESUS hath won the field: Satan is routed and totally put to flight. "Then," when the devil found that JESUS could withſtand even the golden bait, the luſt of the eye and pride of life, in the two laſt, as well as the luſt of the fleſh in the firſt temptation, deſpairing of the leaſt ſucceſs, and quite ſtunned with that all-powerful *Get thee hence, Satan*, "he leaveth him."

Hell, we may well ſuppoſe, like the Philiſtines of old, was confounded, and gave a horrible groan, when they ſaw their great *Goliah*, in whom they had ſo long truſted, thus ſhamefully and totally defeated in no leſs than three pitched battles. The firſt *Adam* was attacked but once, and was conquered; but the ſecond *Adam*, though thus repeatedly aſſaulted, comes off without the leaſt ſin, not only conqueror, but more than conqueror. Think you not, that there was joy, joy unſpeakable in heaven, upon this glorious occaſion? Think you not that the angels, thoſe ſons of GOD, and the multitude of the heavenly hoſt, who ſhouted ſo loud at our LORD's birth, did not repeat, if poſſible, with yet greater extaſy, that heavenly anthem, "Glory be to GOD in the higheſt." For a while they were only ſpectators, orders, we may ſuppoſe, being iſſued out, that they ſhould only wait around, but not relieve their praying, faſting, tempted LORD; but now the reſtraint is removed: Satan departs, and "behold, angels came and miniſtered unto him;" they came to adminiſter to his bodily neceſſities, and to congratulate him upon the glorious and compleat victory which he had gained: ſome of them, it may be, had done this kind office for *Elijah* long ago; and with unſpeakably greater joy, they repeat it to the LORD of *Elijah* now. His Father ſends him bread from heaven; and by this lets him know, that notwithſtanding the horrid temptations with which he had been attacked, he is his own beloved ſon, in and with whom he was well pleaſed.

And was there joy in heaven on this happy occaſion? What equal, and if poſſible, what infinitely greater joy ought there to be among the children of GOD here on earth? For we ſhould do well to remember, that our bleſſed LORD in this great fight with, and conqueſt over the dragon, acted as a public perſon, as a fœderal head of his myſtical body the church,

church, even the common repreſentative of all believers. We may therefore from this bleſſed paſſage gather ſtrong conſolations; ſince by our LORD's conqueſt over Satan, we are thereby aſſured of our own, and in the mean while can apply to him as a compaſſionate High-Prieſt, who was in all things tempted as we are, that he might experimentally be enabled to ſuccour us when we are tempted.

Who, who after hearing of or reading this, can think themſelves hardly uſed, or utterly caſt off by GOD, becauſe they are tempted to ſelf-murder, blaſphemy, or any other horrid and ſhocking crimes? Who can wonder at wave being permitted to come upon wave, and one trial to follow upon the back of another? Who can admire, that Satan follows them to holy ordinances, and tempts them to doubt of the reality of all their manifeſtations, and of their being GOD's children, even after they have enjoyed the moſt intimate and delightful communion with their heavenly Father? Was not our LORD treated thus? And "ſhall the ſervant be above his Lord, or the diſciple above his Maſter?" No; it is ſufficient that the ſervant be as his Lord, and the diſciple as his Maſter.

But not to dwell on a general improvement, let us ſee what particular leſſons may be learned from this affecting portion of holy writ.

And *Firſt*, was our LORD thus violently beſet in the *wilderneſs?* then we may learn, that however profitable ſolitude and retirement may be, when uſed in due ſeaſon, yet when carried to an extreme is hurtful, and rather befriends than prevents temptation. Woe be to him that is thus always alone; for he hath not another to lift him up when he falleth, or to adviſe with when he is tempted. As a hermit in *America* once told me, when I aſked him whether he found that way of life leſſened his temptations; "Doſt not thou know, friend, "(ſaid he) that a tree which grows by itſelf, is more expoſed "to winds and ſtorms than another that ſtands ſurrounded "with other trees in the woods?" Our LORD knew this; and therefore he was *led by the Spirit* into the wilderneſs to be tempted of the devil. LORD, keep us from leading ourſelves into this temptation, and ſuccour and ſupport us whenever led by thy providence into it! Then, and then only, ſhall we be ſafe amidſt the fiery darts of the grand enemy of our ſouls.

Secondly,

Secondly, Did our LORD by prayer, faſting, and temptation, prepare himſelf for his public miniſtry? Surely then, all thoſe who profeſs to be inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt to take upon them the office and adminiſtration of the church, ſhould be prepared in the ſame manner. For though the knowledge of books and men, are good in their places, yet without a knowledge of Satan's devices be ſuperadded, a miniſter will be only like a phyſician, that undertakes to preſcribe to ſick people, without having ſtudied the nature of herbs. And hence, it is to be feared, many heavy laden and afflicted ſouls have been ſent by certain miniſters, to ſurgeons, to be blooded in the arm, inſtead of being directed to apply to the blood of CHRIST to cleanſe their hearts. Hence, conviction is looked upon as a delirium, and violent temptations cenſured as downright madneſs. Hence, ſouls that are truly and earneſtly repenting of their ſins, and as earneſtly ſeeking after reſt in CHRIST, have been directed to plays, novels, romances, and merry company, to divert them from being righteous overmuch. Miſerable comforters are ſuch blind guides! Surely, they deſerve no better titles than that of *murderers of ſouls!* They go not into the kingdom of heaven themſelves, and thoſe who are entering in they would by this means hinder. Go not after them, all ye young men who would be able miniſters of the New Teſtament; but on the contrary, if you would be uſeful in binding up the broken hearted, and pouring the oil of conſolation into wounded ſouls, prepare yourſelves for manifold temptations. For as *Luther* ſays, "prayer "and meditation, reading and temptation, make a miniſter." If now exerciſed with ſpiritual conflicts, be not diſheartened, it is a good ſign that our LORD intends to make uſe of you. Being thus tempted like unto your brethren, you will be the better enabled to ſuccour and adviſe thoſe who ſhall apply to you under their temptations. What ſays the apoſtle *Paul?* "If we are afflicted, it is for your ſake." And if you are afflicted, it is only that you may ſave your own ſouls, and help to ſave the ſouls of thoſe who ſhall be committed to your charge. Be ſtrong therefore in the grace which is in CHRIST JESUS, and learn to endure hardneſs, like good ſoldiers, that are hereafter to inſtruct others how they muſt fight the good fight of faith.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Did the tempter come to CHRIST when he saw him an hungered? Let those of you that are reduced to a low estate, from hence learn, that an hour of poverty is an hour of temptation, not only to murmuring and doubting of our sonship and the divine favour, but also to help ourselves by unlawful means. "If thou be the Son of GOD, said Satan, command that these stones may be made bread." This is what *Agur* dreaded, "lest I be poor and steal." Learn, ye godly poor, to be upon your guard, and remember that poverty and temptations are no marks of your being cast off by GOD. Your LORD was an hungered; your LORD was tempted on this account to doubt his sonship, before you. Learn of him not to distrust, but rather to trust in your heavenly Father. Angels came and ministered unto CHRIST; and he who is LORD of the angels, will send some kind messenger or another to relieve your wants. Your extremity shall be the Redeemer's opportunity to help you. Make your wants known unto him, he careth for you. Though in a desart, though no visible means appear at present, yet you shall in GOD's due time find a table spread for you and yours; "For man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD."

And may not such among you, who are exalted, as well as those who are brought low, from Satan's taking the LORD JESUS, and placing him upon a pinnacle of the temple, learn also a lesson of holy watchfulness and caution. High places are slippery places, and are apt to make even the strongest heads and most devout hearts to turn giddy. How necessary therefore is that excellent petition in our Litany, "in all time of our wealth, (as well as in all time of our tribulation) good LORD deliver us!" Agreeably to this, *Agur* prays as much against riches as poverty; if he was poor, he feared he should be tempted to steal, if rich, that he should trust in uncertain riches, and say, who is the LORD?

I charge, therefore, all of you, who are rich and high in this world, to watch and pray, lest ye fall by Satan's temptation. Those especially of you, that are placed as on the pinnacle of the temple, exalted above your fellows in the church of GOD, take heed in an especial manner unto yourselves, lest by spiritual pride, vanity, or any other sin that doth most easily beset

perſons in ſuch eminent ſtations, ye caſt yourſelves down. This is what Satan aims at. He ſtrives to make us deſtroyers of ourſelves. And he hath a particular enmity againſt ſuch as you; he knows, that your name is *Legion*; and that if you caſt yourſelves down, he ſhall gain a great advantage over many others; you cannot fall alone. O that it may be ſaid of us, as the papiſts uſed to ſay of *Luther*, "That *German* "beaſt doth not love gold." May the fire of divine love burn up all the love of this preſent evil world, and pride of life, out of your hearts! This, Satan reſerved for his laſt, as thinking it was the moſt powerful and prevailing temptation, "He took our LORD up into an exceeding high mountain, and ſhewed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." He cares not how high he exalts us, or how high he is obliged to bid, ſo he can but get our hearts divided between GOD and the world. All this will he offer to give us, if we will only fall down and worſhip him. Arm us, dear LORD JESUS, with thy Spirit, and help us under all ſuch circumſtances, to learn of thee, and ſay unto the tempter, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, thou ſhalt worſhip the LORD thy GOD, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve."

Fourthly, Whether beſet with this or any other temptation, let all of us learn of our LORD to fight the devil with the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of GOD. Though he had the Spirit without meaſure, yet he always made uſe of this. We may ſay of it, as *David* did of *Goliah*'s ſword, "none like this," none like this. And ſuppoſing Satan ſhould be permitted to transform himſelf into an angel of light, and by falſe impreſſions, and deluſive applications of miſquoted texts, attempt to turn this weapon upon us againſt ourſelves; let us not therefore be prevailed on to let go, but by comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, as our LORD did, find out GOD's mind and our duty. Had CHRIST's children and miniſters only obſerved this one leſſon, how much ſtrange fire would quickly have been extinguiſhed? how much real enthuſiaſm been eaſily ſtopped? how many imaginary revelations have been detected? how many triumphs of Satan and his miſſaries been prevented? and how much more would the comforts of CHRIST's people and miniſters been continued and increaſed, not only in this preſent, but alſo in every age

of the chriſtian church? But let us not be diſcouraged or think worſe of CHRIST, his cauſe, or his word, becauſe through Satan's ſubtlety, any of us, or others, may have been drawn in to make ſome wrong applications of it; others have been thus tempted and miſtaken before us. However, let us be humbled before GOD and man, and be excited by our paſt ignorance of Satan's devices, to adhere more cloſely to the written word, and to pray more earneſtly for GOD's holy Spirit to give us direction by it. "Then will it ſtill be a lanthorn unto our feet, and a light unto our paths;" we ſhall yet be enabled to behave more ſkilfully under all our future trials. Many we muſt yet expect; nay, perhaps our ſevereſt temptations are yet to come; Satan left our LORD, after his attacking him in the wilderneſs, "only for a ſeaſon," as St. *Luke* has it, until the ſeaſon of his death and paſſion. And thus he may be permitted to deal with us. We are not yet come to our compleat reſt; the King of terrors is yet to be grappled with, and the valley of the ſhadow of death to be paſſed through; long before that, we may be called to endure many a fiery trial, and be beſet with manifold temptations, under which we may be as ignorant how to behave, as under thoſe with which we have already been viſited. Alas! we know not what remaining corruptions are in our hearts, which time and temptation may draw out and diſcover. Perhaps Satan hath not yet attacked us on our weakeſt ſide; when he does, if left to ourſelves, how weak ſhall we be! It is ſaid of *Achilles*, that he was invulnerable, except in the heel, and by a wound in that, at laſt he died. Let not him, therefore, that putteth on the harneſs, boaſt as though he had put it off." Neither, on the other hand, let us be faint-hearted or diſmayed. Satan may tempt, but cannot force; he may ſift, but CHRIST will pray. He who hath helped us already, will help us to the end. He who conquered for us in the wilderneſs, will ere long make us alſo more than conquerors over all trials and temptations, inward and outward, and over death and hell itſelf, through his almighty, everlaſting, and never-failing love. We now ſow in tears; in a very little time, and we ſhall reap with joy: we may now go on our way weeping, by reaſon of the enemy oppreſſing us; but, ere long, angels ſhall be ſent, not to miniſter to us in this

wilderneſs,

wilderneſs, but to carry us to an heavenly *Canaan*, even to *Abraham*'s boſom. Then ſhall we ſee this accuſer and tempter of our LORD, of our brethren, and of ourſelves, caſt out: this wicked one, as well as the wicked world, and wicked heart, will no more be permitted to vex, diſturb or annoy us.

"But woe unto you that laugh now; for you ſhall then lament and weep." Woe unto you, who either believe there is no devil, or never felt any of his temptations. Woe unto you that are at eaſe in *Zion*, and inſtead of ſtaying to be tempted by the devil, by idleneſs, ſelf-indulgence, and making continual proviſion for the fleſh, even tempt the devil to tempt you. Woe unto you, who not content with ſinning yourſelves, turn factors for hell, and make a trade of tempting others to ſin. Woe unto you, who either deny divine revelation, or never make uſe of it but to ſerve a bad turn. Woe unto you who ſell your conſciences, and pawn your ſouls for a little worldly wealth or honour. Woe unto you who climb up to high places, when in church or ſtate, by corruption, bribery, extortion, cringing, flattery, or bowing down to, and ſoothing the vices of thoſe by whom you expect to riſe. Woe unto you! for whether you will own the relation or not, ſurely you are of your father the devil; for the works of your father you will do; I tremble for you. How can you eſcape the damnation of hell.

But I have not time to follow ſuch as you any farther. This diſcourſe, and the preſent frame of my mind, lead me rather to ſpeak to thoſe, who by feeling Satan's fiery darts, know aſſuredly that there is a devil. Comfort thou, comfort thou, theſe afflicted ones, O LORD. O thou all-merciful and all-bountiful GOD, and thou compaſſionate High-Prieſt, thou once tempted, but now triumphant Saviour, as thou once didſt not diſdain to be miniſtered unto by angels, bleſs we pray thee this diſcourſe, to the ſupport and ſtrengthening of thy tempted people, though delivered by the meaneſt meſſenger thou didſt ever yet employ in thy church!

I add no more. The LORD bleſs you and keep you! The LORD lift up the light of his countenance, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, and ſettle you, and bring you to his eternal kingdom!

SERMON XVIII.

The Heinous Sin of Profane Curſing and Swearing.

MATTHEW v. 34.

But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all.

AMONG the many heinous ſins for which this nation is grown infamous, perhaps there is no one more crying, but withal more common, than the abominable cuſtom of profane ſwearing and curſing. Our ſtreets abound with perſons of all degrees and qualities, who are continually provoking the holy one of *Iſrael* to anger, by their deteſtable oaths and blaſphemies: and our very children, "out of whoſe mouths," the pſalmiſt obſerves in his days, "was perfected praiſe," are now grown remarkable for the quite oppoſite ill quality of curſing and ſwearing. This cannot but be a melancholy proſpect, for every ſincere and honeſt miniſter of JESUS CHRIST, to view his fellow-creatures in; and ſuch as will put him on contriving ſome means to prevent the ſpreading at leaſt of ſo growing an evil; knowing that the LORD (without repentance) will aſſuredly viſit for theſe things. But alas! what can he do? Public animadverſions are ſo neglected amongſt us, that we ſeldom find a common ſwearer puniſhed as the laws direct. And as for private admonition, men are now ſo hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin, that to give them ſober and pious advice, and to ſhew them the evil of their doings, is but like "caſting pearls before ſwine; they only turn again and rend you." Since matters then are come to this paſs, all that we can do is, that as we are appointed watchmen

atchmen and ambaſſadors of the LORD, it is our duty from me to time to ſhew the people their tranſgreſſion, and warn hem of their ſin; ſo that whether they will hear, or whether hey will forbear, we however may deliver our own ſouls. That I therefore may diſcharge my duty in this particular, ;ive me leave, in the name of GOD, humbly to offer to your noſt ſerious conſideration, ſome few obſervations on the words of the text, in order to ſhew the heinouſneſs of profane :urſing and ſwearing.

But, before I proceed directly to the proſecution of this point, it will be proper to clear this precept of our LORD rom a miſrepreſentation that has been put on it by ſome, who infer from hence, that our Saviour prohibits ſwearing before a magiſtrate, when required on a ſolemn and proper occaſion. But that all ſwearing is not abſolutely unlawful for a chriſtian, is evident from the writings of St. *Paul*, whom we often find upon ſome ſolemn occaſions uſing ſeveral forms of imprecation, as, "I call GOD to witneſs;" "GOD is my judge;" "By your rejoicing in CHRIST JESUS," and ſuch like. And that our Saviour does by no means forbid ſwearing before a magiſtrate, in the words now before us, is plain, if we conſider the ſcope and deſign he had in view, when he gave his diſciples this command. Permit me to obſerve to you then, that our bleſſed maſter had ſet himſelf, from the 27th verſe of the chapter, out of which the text is taken, to vindicate and clear the moral law from the corrupt gloſſes and miſconſtruction of the *Phariſees*, who then ſat in *Moſes*'s chair, but were notoriouſly faulty in adhering too cloſely to the literal expreſſion of the law, without ever conſidering the due extent and ſpiritual meaning of it. Accordingly they imagined, that becauſe GOD had ſaid, "Thou ſhalt not commit adultery," that therefore, ſuppoſing a perſon was not guilty of the very act of adultery, he was not chargeable with the breach of the ſeventh commandment. And likewiſe in the matter of ſwearing, becauſe GOD had forbidden his people, in the books of *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*, "to take his name in vain," or to ſwear falſely by his name; they therefore judged it lawful to ſwear by any creature in common diſcourſe, ſuppoſing they did not directly mention the name of GOD. Our bleſſed Saviour therefore, in the words now before us,

rectifies this their miſtake about ſwearing, as he had done in the verſes immediately foregoing, concerning adultery, and tells the people, that whatever allowances the *Phariſees* might give to ſwear by any creature, yet he pronounced it abſolutely unlawful for any of his followers to do ſo. "You have heard, that it has been ſaid by them of old time," (namely, by the *Phariſees* and teachers of the *Jewiſh* law) "Thou ſhalt not forſwear thyſelf, but perform unto the LORD thine oaths: but I ſay unto you," (I who am appointed by the Father to be the great prophet and true law-giver of his church) "Swear not at all, (in your common converſation) neither by heaven for it is GOD's throne; (and therefore to ſwear by that, is to ſwear by Him that ſits thereon) neither by the earth, for it is his foot-ſtool; nor by *Jeruſalem*, for it is the city of the great King; neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy head, becauſe thou canſt not make one hair white or black: but let your communications (which plainly ſhews that CHRIST is here ſpeaking of ſwearing, not before a magiſtrate, but in common converſation) let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay, (a ſtrong affirmation or negation at the moſt); for whatſoever is more than this, cometh of evil;" that is, cometh from an evil principle, from the evil one, the devil, the author of all evil.

Which by the way, methinks, ſhould be a caution to all ſuch perſons, who, though not guilty of ſwearing in the groſs ſenſe of the word, yet atteſt the truth of what they are ſpeaking of, though ever ſo trifling, by ſaying, Upon my life,—as I live,—by my faith,—by the heavens, and ſuch like: which expreſſions, however harmleſs and innocent they may be eſteemed by ſome ſorts of people, yet are the very oaths which our bleſſed LORD condemns in the words immediately following the text; and perſons who uſe ſuch unwarrantable forms of ſpeaking, muſt expect to be convicted and condemned as ſwearers, at our Saviour's ſecond coming to judge the world.

But to return: It appears then from the whole tenor of our Saviour's diſcourſe, that in the words of the text he does by no means diſannul or forbid ſwearing before a magiſtrate (which, as might eaſily be ſhewn, is both lawful and neceſſary) but only profane ſwearing in common converſation;

the

the heinouſneſs and ſinfulneſs of which I come now, more immediately to lay before you.

And here, not to mention that it is a direct breach of our bleſſed maſter's and great law-giver's command in the words of the text, as likewiſe of the third commandment, wherein GOD poſitively declares, "he will not hold him guiltleſs (that is, will aſſuredly puniſh him) that taketh his name in vain:" not to mention that it is the greateſt abuſe of that noble faculty of ſpeech, whereby we are diſtinguiſhed from the brute creation; or the great hazard the common ſwearer runs, of being perjured ſome time or other: not to mention thoſe reaſons againſt it, which of themſelves would abundantly prove the folly and ſinfulneſs of ſwearing: I ſhall at this time content myſelf with inſtancing four particulars, which highly aggravate the crime of profane ſwearing, and thoſe are ſuch as follow:

I. *Firſt*, Becauſe there is no temptation in nature to this ſin, nor does the commiſſion of it afford the offender the leaſt pleaſure or ſatisfaction.

II. *Secondly*, Becauſe it is a ſin which may be ſo often repeated.

III. *Thirdly*, Becauſe it hardens infidels againſt the chriſtian religion, and muſt give great offence, and occaſion much ſorrow and concern to every true diſciple of JESUS CHRIST.

IV. *Fourthly*, Becauſe it is an extremity of ſin, which can only be matched in hell.

I. The firſt reaſon then, why ſwearing in common converſation is ſo heinous in GOD's ſight, and why we ſhould not ſwear at all, is, becauſe it has no temptation in nature, nor does the commiſſion of it, unleſs a man be a devil incarnate, afford the offender the leaſt pleaſure or ſatisfaction.

Now here, I preſume, we may lay it down as a maxim univerſally agreed on, that the guilt of any crime is increaſed or leſſened in proportion to the weakneſs or ſtrength of the temptation, by which a perſon is carried to the commiſſion of

it. It was this conſideration that extenuated and diminiſhed the guilt of *Saul*'s taking upon him to offer ſacrifice before the Prophet *Samuel* came; and of *Uzza*'s touching the ark, becauſe it was in danger of falling: as, on the contrary, what ſo highly aggravated the diſobedience of our firſt parents, and of *Lot*'s wife, was, becauſe the former had ſo little reaſon to eat the forbidden fruit, and the latter ſo ſmall a temptation to look back on *Sodom*.

And now if this be granted, ſurely the common ſwearer muſt of all ſinners be the moſt without excuſe, ſince there is no manner of temptation in nature to the commiſſion of his crime. In moſt of the other commands, perſons, perhaps, may plead the force of natural inclination in excuſe for the breach of them: one, for inſtance, may alledge his ſtrong propenſity to anger, to excuſe his breaking of the ſixth: another, his proneneſs to luſt, for his violation of the ſeventh. But ſurely the common ſwearer has nothing of this kind to urge in his behalf: for though he may have a natural inclination to this or that crime, yet no man, it is to be preſumed, can ſay, he is born with a ſwearing conſtitution.

But farther, As there is no temptation to it, ſo there is no pleaſure or profit to be reaped from the commiſſion of it. Aſk the drunkard why he riſes up early to follow ſtrong drink, and he will tell you, becauſe it affords his ſenſual appetite ſome kind of pleaſure and gratification, though it be no higher than that of a brute. Enquire of the covetous worldling, why he defrauds and over-reaches his neighbour, and he has an anſwer ready; to enrich himſelf, and lay up goods for many years. But it muſt certainly puzzle the profane ſwearer himſelf, to inform you what pleaſure he reaps from ſwearing; for alas! it is a fruitleſs taſteleſs thing that he ſells his ſoul for. But indeed he does not ſell it at all: in this caſe he prodigally gives it away (without repentance) to the devil; and parts with a bleſſed eternity, and runs into everlaſting torment, merely for nothing.

II. But *Secondly*, what increaſes the heinouſneſs of profane ſwearing, is, that it is a ſin which may ſo often be repeated.

This is another conſideration which always ſerves to leſſen or increaſe the guilt and malignity of any ſin. It was ſome

excuſe for the drunkenneſs of *Noah*, and the adultery of *David*, that they committed theſe crimes but once: as, on the contrary, of the patriarch *Abraham*'s diſtruſt of GOD, that he repeated the diſſembling of *Sarah* to be his wife, two ſeveral times. And if this be admitted as an aggravation of other perſons crimes, ſurely much more ſo of the guilt of common ſwearing, becauſe it is a ſin which may be, and is for the generality often repeated. In many other groſs ſins it cannot be ſo: if a man be overcome in drink, there muſt be a conſiderable time ere he can recover his debauch, and return to his cups again: or if he be accuſtomed to profane the ſabbath, he cannot do it every day, but only one in ſeven. But alas! the profane ſwearer is ready for another oath, almoſt before the ſound of the firſt is out of our ears: yea, ſome double and treble them in one ſentence, even ſo as to confound the ſenſe of what they ſay, by an horrid din of blaſphemy! Now if the great and terrible *Jehovah* has expreſly declared that he will not hold him guiltleſs, that is, will aſſuredly puniſh him, that taketh his name but once in vain: what a vaſt heap of theſe heinous ſins lies at every common ſwearer's door! It would be apt to ſink him into an intolerable deſpair, did he but ſee the whole ſum of them. And O what a ſeared conſcience muſt that wretch have, that does not feel this prodigious weight!

III. But *Thirdly*, what makes the ſin of profane ſwearing appear yet more exceeding ſinful, is, that it hardens infidels againſt the chriſtian religion.

It is the Apoſtle *Peter*'s advice to the married perſons of his time, that they ſhould walk as became the goſpel of CHRIST, that thoſe who were without, might be won to embrace the chriſtian religion, by ſeeing and obſerving their pious converſation coupled together with fear. And what the Apoſtle preſſes on married perſons, we find elſewhere enjoined on each particular member of the church. Accordingly we are commanded by our bleſſed LORD, to "let our light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven:" And the Apoſtle *Paul* bids us "walk circumſpectly towards them that are without, redeeming the time;" that is, embracing all opportunities to do them good,

"becauſe

"because the days are evil." But alas! in what a direct contradiction does the profane swearer live to this and such like precepts, who, instead of gaining proselytes to CHRIST from the unbelieving part of the world, does all he can to oppose it! For how can it be expected, that infidels should honour our GOD, when christians themselves despise him; or that any should embrace our religion, when professors of it themselves make so light of one of its strictest commands? No; to our grief and shame be it spoken, it is by reason of such impieties as these, that our holy religion (the best and purest in itself) is become a by-word among the heathen; that the sacred authority of the holy JESUS and his doctrine is despised; and "GOD's name (as it is written) blasphemed among the *Gentiles*."

These cannot but be sad stumbling-blocks and offences in the way of our brethren's conversion: "But woe be to those men by whom such offences come." We may say of them, as our blessed LORD did of *Judas*, "It had been better for such men, that they had never been born:" Or, as he threatens in another place, "It shall be more tolerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* in the day of judgment, than for such sinners."

But this is not all; As profane swearing must undoubtedly harden those in their infidelity, that are without, so must it no less grieve and give great offence to those honest and sincere persons that are within the church. We hear of *David*'s complaining and crying out, "Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with *Mesech*, and to have my habitation amongst the tents of *Kedar*;" that is, that he was obliged to live and converse with a people exceedingly wicked and profane. And St. *Peter* tells us, that "*Lot*'s righteous soul was grieved day by day, whilst he saw and observed the ungodly conversation of the wicked." And no doubt it was one great part of our blessed Master's sufferings whilst on earth, that he was compelled to converse with a wicked and perverse generation, and to hear his heavenly Father's sacred name profaned and scoffed at by unrighteous and wicked men. And surely it cannot but pierce the heart of every true and sincere christian, of every one that does in any measure partake of the spirit of his Master, to hear the multitude of oaths and curses which proceed daily and hourly out of the mouths of many people, and

those

thoſe too, whoſe liberal education, and ſeeming regard for the welfare of religion, one would think, ſhould teach them a more becoming behaviour. To hear the great and terrible name of GOD polluted by men, which is adored by angels; and to conſider how often that ſacred name is profaned in common diſcourſe, which we are not worthy to mention in our prayers: this, I ſay, cannot but make each of them cry out with holy *David*, "Woe is me, that I am conſtrained to dwell with *Meſech*, and to have my habitation amongſt the tents of *Kedar*." And though the blaſphemous and profane diſcourſes of others, will not be imputed to ſincere perſons for ſin, ſo long as they "have no fellowſhip with ſuch helliſh fruits of darkneſs, but rather reprove them;" yet it will greatly enhance the preſent guilt, and ſadly increaſe the future puniſhment of every profane ſwearer, by whom ſuch offences come. For if, as our Saviour tells us, "it had been better for a man to have a mill-ſtone tied about his neck, than that he ſhould offend one of his little ones, (that is, the weakeſt of his diſciples) how much ſorer puniſhment will they be thought worthy of," who not only cauſe GOD's name to be blaſphemed among the *Gentiles*, and the religion of our dear Redeemer to be abhorred; but who make his ſaints to weep and mourn, and vex their righteous ſouls from day to day, by their ungodly, profane, and blaſphemous converſation? Surely, as GOD will put the tears of the one into his bottle, ſo it will be juſt in him to puniſh the other with eternal ſorrow, for all their ungodly and hard ſpeeches, and caſt them into a lake of fire and brimſtone, where they ſhall be glad of a drop of water to cool thoſe tongues, with which they have ſo often blaſphemed the LORD of Hoſts, and grieved the people of our GOD.

IV. But it is time for me to proceed to give my *Fourth* and laſt reaſon, why common ſwearing is ſo exceeding ſinful; and that is, Becauſe it is ſuch an extremity of ſin, that can only be matched in hell, where all are deſperate, and without hope of mercy.

The damned devils, and damned ſouls of men in hell, may be ſuppoſed to rave and blaſpheme in their torments, becauſe they know that the chains wherein they are held, can never be

knocked off: but for men that ſwim in the river of God's goodneſs, whoſe mercies are renewed to them every morning, and who are viſited with freſh tokens of his infinite unmerited loving-kindneſs every moment: for theſe favourite creatures to ſet their mouths againſt heaven, and to blaſpheme a gracious, patient, all-bountiful GOD; is a height of ſin which exceeds the blackneſs and impiety of devils and hell itſelf.

And now, after what has been here offered, to ſhew the heinouſneſs of profane curſing and ſwearing in common converſation, may I not very juſtly addreſs myſelf to you in the words of the text, "Therefore I ſay unto you, Swear not at all;" ſince it is a ſin that has no temptation in nature, nor brings any pleaſure or profit to the committer of it; ſince it hardens infidels in their infidelity, and affords ſad cauſes of grief and lamentation to every honeſt chriſtian; ſince it is a ſin that generally grows into a habit; and laſtly, ſuch a ſin that can only be matched in hell.

1. And firſt then, if theſe things be ſo, and the ſin of profane ſwearing, as hath been in ſome meaſure ſhewn, is ſo exceeding ſinful, what ſhall we ſay to ſuch unhappy men, who think it not only allowable, but faſhionable and polite, to "take the name of GOD in vain;" who imagine that ſwearing makes them look big among their companions, and really think it a piece of honour to abound in it? But alas! little do they think that ſuch a behaviour argues the greateſt degeneracy of mind and fool-hardineſs, that can poſſibly be thought of. For what can be more baſe, than one hour to pretend to adore GOD in public worſhip, and the very next moment to blaſpheme his name: indeed, ſuch a behaviour, from perſons who deny the being of a GOD, (if any ſuch fools there be) is not altogether ſo much to be wondered at; but for men, who not only ſubſcribe to the belief of a Deity, but likewiſe acknowledge him to be a GOD of infinite majeſty and power; for ſuch men to blaſpheme his holy name, by profane curſing and ſwearing, and at the ſame time confeſs, that this very GOD has expreſsly declared, he will not hold him guiltleſs, but will certainly and eternally puniſh (without repentance) him that taketh his name in vain; is ſuch an inſtance of fool-hardineſs, as well as baſeneſs, that can ſcarcely be paralleled. This is what they preſume not to do in other caſes of leſs

danger;

danger: they dare not revile a general at the head of his army, nor rouze a ſleeping lion when within reach of his paw. And is the Almighty GOD, the great JEHOVAH, the everlaſting King, who can conſume them by the breath of his noſtrils, and frown them to hell in an inſtant; is he the only contemptible being in their account, that may be provoked without fear, and offended without puniſhment? No; though GOD bear long, he will not bear always: the time will come, and that too, perhaps, much ſooner than ſuch perſons may expect, when GOD will vindicate his injured honour, when he will lay bare his almighty arm, and make thoſe wretches feel the eternal ſmart of his juſtice, whoſe power and name they have ſo often vilified and blaſphemed. Alas! what will become of all their bravery then? Will they then wantonly ſport with the name of their Maker, and call upon the King of all the earth to damn them any more in jeſt? No; their note will then be changed: indeed, they ſhall call, but it will be for "the rocks to fall on them, and the hills to cover them from the wrath of him that ſitteth upon the throne, and from the Lamb for ever." It is true, time was when they prayed, though without thought, perhaps, for damnation both for themſelves and others: and now they will find their prayers anſwered. "They delighted in curſing, therefore ſhall it happen unto them; they loved not bleſſing, therefore ſhall it be far from them; they cloathed themſelves with curſing like as with a garment, and it ſhall come into their bowels like water, and like oil into their bones."

2. But farther, if the ſin of ſwearing is ſo exceeding heinous, and withal ſo common, then it is every particular perſon's duty, eſpecially thoſe that are in authority, to do their utmoſt towards diſcountenancing and ſuppreſſing ſo malignant a crime. The duty we owe both to GOD and our neighbour, requires this at our hands: by the one we are obliged to aſſert our Maker's honour; by the other to prevent our neighbour's ruin: and it is but doing as we would be done by, and as we ourſelves act in caſes of leſſer conſequence. Were we to hear either our own or our friend's good name vilified and traduced, we ſhould think it our bounden duty to vindicate the wronged reputation of each: and ſhall the great, terrible, and holy name of our beſt and only friend, our king,

our

our father, nay our GOD: ſhall this be daily, nay every moment, defied and blaſphemed; and will no one dare to ſtand up in defence of his honour and holineſs? Be aſtoniſhed, O heavens, at this! No; let us ſcorn all ſuch baſe and treacherous treatment: let us reſolve to ſupport the cauſe of religion, and with a becoming prudent courage manifeſt our zeal for the honour of the LORD of Hoſts. Men in authority have double the advantages of ordinary chriſtians: their very office ſhews they are intended for the puniſhment of evil doers. And ſuch is the degeneracy of mankind, that the generality of them will be more influenced by the power of perſons in authority, than by the moſt laboured exhortations from the pulpit. To ſuch, therefore, if there are any here preſent, I humbly addreſs myſelf, beſeeching them, in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, to do their utmoſt to put a ſtop to, and reſtrain profane curſing and ſwearing. And though it muſt be confeſſed, that this is a work which requires a great deal of courage and pains, yet they would do well to conſider, it is for GOD they undertake it, who certainly will ſupport and bear them out in a due execution of their office here, and reward them with an exceeding and eternal weight of glory hereafter. But it is time to draw towards a concluſion.

3. Let me, therefore, once more addreſs myſelf to every perſon here preſent, in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; and if any amongſt them have been any way guilty of this notorious ſin of ſwearing, let me entreat them by all that is near and dear to them, that they would neither give the magiſtrate the trouble to puniſh, nor their friends any reaſon for the future to warn them againſt committing the crime; but keep a conſtant and careful watch over the door of their lips, and withal implore the divine aſſiſtance (without which all is nothing) that they offend no more ſo ſcandalouſly with their tongues. Let them ſeriouſly lay to heart, what with great plainneſs and ſimplicity has here been delivered: and if they have any regard for themſelves as men, or their reputation as chriſtians; if they would not be a public ſcandal to their profeſſion, or a grief to all that know or converſe with them: in ſhort, if they would not be devils incarnate here, and provoke GOD to puniſh them eternally hereafter; I ſay unto them in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, "Swear not at all."

SERMON

SERMON XIX.

CHRIST the Support of the Tempted.

MATTHEW vi. 13.

Lead us not into Temptation.

THE great and important duty which is incumbent on chriſtians, is to guard againſt all appearance of evil; to watch againſt the firſt riſings in the heart to evil; and to have a guard upon our actions, that they may not be ſinful, or ſo much as ſeem to be ſo. It is true, the devil is tempting us continually, and our own evil hearts are ready to join with the tempter, to make us fall into ſins, that he thereby may obtain a victory over us, and that we, my brethren, may be his ſubjects, his ſervants, his ſlaves; and then by-and-by he will pay us our wages, which will be death temporal, and death eternal. Our LORD JESUS CHRIST ſaw how his people would be tempted; and that the great enemy of their ſouls would lay hold of every opportunity, ſo he could but be a means of keeping poor ſinners from coming to the LORD JESUS CHRIST; hurrying you with temptation, to drive you to ſome great ſins; and then if he cannot gain you over, fall it to a ſmaller, and ſuit his temptations time after time; and when he finds none of theſe things will do, often tranſform himſelf into an angel of light, and by that means make the ſoul fall into ſin, to the diſhonour of GOD, and the wounding of itſelf: the LORD JESUS, I ſay, ſeeing how liable his diſciples, and all others, would be to be overcome by temptation, therefore adviſes them, when they pray, to beg that they might not be led into temptation. It is ſo dangerous to engage ſo ſubtle and powerful an enemy as Satan is, that we ſhall be overcome as often as we engage, unleſs the

LORD

LORD is on our ſide. My brethren, if you were left to yourſelves, you would be overcome by every temptation with which you are beſet.

Theſe words are part of the prayer which CHRIST taught his diſciples; and I ſhall, therefore, make no doubt, but that you all believe them to be true, ſince they are ſpoken by one who cannot lie. I ſhall,

I. Shew you who it is that tempts you.

II. Shall ſhew, my brethren, why he tempts you.

III. Mention ſome of the ways and means he makes uſe of, to draw you over to his temptations.

IV. Let you ſee how earneſt you ought to be to the LORD, that he may preſerve you from being led into temptation.

V. I ſhall make ſome application by way of entreaty unto you, to come unto CHRIST, that he, my brethren, may deliver you from being tempted.

I. *Firſt*, We are to conſider who it is that tempts ye.

And the Tempter is Satan, the prince of the power of the air, he that now ruleth in the children of diſobedience; he is an enemy to GOD and goodneſs, he is a hater of all truth: Why elſe did he ſlander GOD in paradiſe? Why did he tell *Eve*, "You ſhall not ſurely die?" He is full of malice, envy, and revenge: for what reaſons elſe could induce him to moleſt innocent man in paradiſe? The perſon that tempts ye, my brethren, is remarkable for his ſubtilty: for having not power given him from above, he is obliged to wait for opportunities to betray us, and to catch us by guile: he, therefore, made uſe of the ſerpent to tempt our firſt parents: and to lie in wait to deceive, is another part of his character. And though this character is given of the devil, if we were to examine our own hearts, we ſhould find many of the tempter's characters legible in us.

Do not many of you love to make a lie? And if it is done in your trade, you therefore look on it as excuſable; but whether you believe it or not, it is ſinful, it is exceedingly ſinful. Though you may value yourſelves as fine rational creatures,

creatures, and that you are noble beings; and you were ſo, as you firſt came out of GOD's hands; but now you are fallen, there is nothing lovely, nothing deſirable in man; his heart is a ſink of pollution, full of ſin and uncleanneſs: Yet, though a man's own heart is ſo deſperately wicked, he is told by our modern polite preachers, that there is a fitneſs in men, and that GOD ſeeing you a good creature, gives you his grace; but this, though it is a modern, polite, and faſhionable way of talking, is very unſcriptural; it is very contrary to the doctrines of the Reformation, and to our own Articles. But however contrary to the doctrines of the Church of *England*, yet our pulpits ring of nothing more, than doing no one any harm, living honeſtly, loving your neighbour as yourſelves, and do what you can, and then CHRIST is to make up the deficiency: this is making CHRIST to be half a ſaviour, and man the other part; but I ſay, CHRIST will be your whole righteouſneſs, your whole wiſdom, your whole ſanctification, or elſe he will never be your whole redemption. How amazing is it, that the miniſters of the church of *England* ſhould ſpeak quite contrary to what they have ſubſcribed! Good GOD! if theſe are the guides of the ignorant, and eſteemed to be the true miniſters of JESUS, becauſe they have a great ſhare of letter-learning; when at the ſame time they are only the blind leaders of the blind; and without a ſpecial Providence, they both will fall into the ditch.

No wonder at people's talking of the fitneſs and unfitneſs of things, when they can tell us, that the Spirit of GOD, is a good conſcience, and the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt are conſequent thereupon. But this is wrong; for it ſhould be ſaid, the Spirit of GOD, are the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, and a good conſcience conſequent thereupon. *Seneca*, *Cicero*, *Plato*, or any of the heathen philoſophers, would have given as good a definition as this; it means no more than reflecting we have done well.

But let theſe modern, polite gentlemen, and let my letter-learned brethren, paint man in as lovely colours as they pleaſe, I will not do it: I dare not make him better than the word of GOD does. If I was to paint man in his proper colours, I muſt go to the kingdom of hell for a copy: for man is by nature full of pride, ſubtilty, malice, envy, revenge,

and all uncharitableneſs; and what are theſe but the tempers of the devil? and luſt, ſenſuality, pleaſure, theſe are the tempers of the beaſt. Thus, my brethren, man is half a beaſt, and half a devil, a motley mixture of the beaſt and devil. And this is the creature, who has made himſelf ſo obnoxious to the wrath of GOD, and open to his indignation, that is told, that he muſt be part his own ſaviour, by doing good works, and what he cannot do CHRIST will do for him.

This is giving the tempter great room to come in with his temptation; he may preſs a ſoul to follow moral duties, to go to church, take the ſacrament, read, pray, meditate; the devil is well content you ſhould do all theſe; but if they are done in your own ſtrength, or if you go no farther than here, you are only going a ſmoother way to hell.

Thus, my brethren, you may ſee who it is that tempts us. But

II. Why he tempts you, is the ſecond thing I am to ſhew you.

It is out of envy to you, and to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, he endeavours to keep you from cloſing with JESUS; and if he can but keep you from laying hold by faith on CHRIST, he knows he has you ſafe enough; and the more temptations you are under, and according to their nature and greatneſs, you are more hurried in your minds; and the more unſettled your thoughts and affections are, the more apt you are to conclude, that if you were to go to CHRIST, at preſent, in all that hurry of mind, he would not receive you; but this is the policy of the tempter, to make you have low and diſhonourable thoughts of the bleſſed JESUS; and ſo by degrees he works upon your minds, that you are careleſs and indifferent about CHRIST. This, this, my brethren, is the deſign of the tempter. Nothing will pleaſe him more, than to ſee you ruined and loſt for ever. He tempts you for that end, that you may loſe your intereſt in JESUS CHRIST, and that you may dwell with him and apoſtate ſpirits to all eternity. He knows that JESUS CHRIST died for ſinners, yet he would fain keep ſouls from ſeeking to this city of refuge for ſhelter, and from going to *Gilead* for the true balm.

It is he that rules in thy heart, O ſcoffer, O *Phariſee*; the devil reigns there, and endeavours to blind your eyes, that you ſhall not ſee what danger you are in, and how much evil there is in thoſe hearts of yours; and as long as he can keep you eaſy and unconcerned about having your hearts changed, he will be eaſy; though if he can, he will tempt you to ſin againſt him, until you are hardened in your iniquity. O, my brethren, do not give the devil a handle wherewith he may lay hold on you: alas! it is no wonder that the devil tempts you, when he finds you at a play, a ball, or maſquerade; if you are doing the devil's work, it is no wonder if he preſſes you in the continuation thereof; and how can any ſay, "Lead us not into temptation," in the morning, when they are reſolved to run into it at night? Good GOD! Are theſe perſons members of the church of *England?* Alas, when you have gone to church, and read over the prayers, it is offering no more than the ſacrifice of fools; you ſay *Amen* to them with your lips, when in your hearts you are either unconcerned at what you are about, or elſe you think that the bare ſaying of your prayers is ſufficient, and that then GOD and you have balanced accounts.

But, my dear brethren, do not deceive yourſelves, GOD is not to be mocked. You are only ruining yourſelves for time and eternity. You pray, "lead us not into temptation," when you are tempting the devil to come and tempt you.

III. I ſhall now point out ſome of the ways and means, he makes uſe of to draw you to himſelf.

But this is a field ſo large, and I have but juſt begun to be a ſoldier of JESUS CHRIST, that I cannot name many unto you. I ſhall therefore be very ſhort on this head.

1. He endeavours to make you think ſin is not ſo great as it is; that there is no occaſion of being ſo over-ſtrict, and that you are righteous over-much; that you are oſtentatious, and will do yourſelf harm by it; and that you will deſtroy yourſelves. He ſhows you, my brethren, the bait, but he hides the hook; he ſhows you the pleaſure, profits and advantages, that attend abundance of this world's goods; but he does not ſhow you the croſſes, loſſes and vexations that you

may have while you are in the enjoyment of the bleſſings of this world.

2. When he finds he cannot allure you by flattery, he will try you by frowns, and the terrors of this world; he will ſtir up people to point at you, and cry, "Here comes another "troop of his followers:" He will ſtir them up to jeer, ſcoff, backbite, and hate you; but if he ſtill finds this will not do, then he throws doubts, my brethren, and diſcouragements in your mind, whether the way you are in is the true way or not; or elſe he will ſuggeſt, What! do you expect to be ſaved by CHRIST? Alſo, He did not die for you; you have been too great a ſinner; you have lived in ſin ſo long, and committed ſuch ſins againſt CHRIST, which he will not forgive. Thus he hurries poor ſinners almoſt into deſpair.

And very often, when the people of GOD are met to worſhip him, he ſends his agents, the ſcoffers, to diſturb them. We ſaw an inſtance of their rage juſt now; they would fain have diſturbed us; but the LORD was on our ſide, and ſo prevented all the attempts of wicked and deſigning men, to diſturb and diſquiet us. LORD JESUS, forgive them who are thus perſecuting thy truth! JESUS, ſhew them that they are fighting againſt thee, and that it is hard for them to kick againſt the pricks! Theſe, my brethren, are ſome of the ways Satan takes, in his temptations, to bring you from CHRIST: Many more might be named; but theſe are ſufficient, I hope, to keep you on your guard, againſt all that the enemy can do to hinder you from coming to CHRIST.

IV. I come to ſhew you, how earneſt you ought to be with JESUS CHRIST, either not to ſuffer you to be led into temptations, or to preſerve you under them.

And here, my dear brethren, let me beſeech you to go to JESUS CHRIST; tell him, how you are aſſaulted by the evil one, who lies in wait for your ſouls; tell him, you are not able to maſter him, in your own ſtrength; beg his aſſiſtance, and you ſhall find him ready to help you; ready to aſſiſt you, and to be your Guide, your Comforter, your Saviour, your All: He will give you ſtrength to reſiſt the fiery darts of the devil; and, therefore, you can no where find one ſo proper to relieve you, as JESUS CHRIST; he knows what it is to be

tempted; he was tempted by Satan in the wilderneſs, and he will give you the aſſiſtance of his Spirit, to reſiſt the evil one, and then he will fly from you. In CHRIST JESUS you ſhall have the ſtrength you ſtand in need of, the devil ſhall have no power; therefore fear not, for in the name of the LORD we ſhall overcome all our ſpiritual *Amalekites:* Let the devil and his agents rage, let them breathe out threatnings, yea, let them breathe out ſlaughters, yet we can rejoice in this, that JESUS CHRIST hath them in his power, they ſhall go no farther than he permits them; they may rage, they may rage horribly, but they can go no farther, until they have got more power from on high.

If they could do us what miſchief they would, very few of us ſhould be permitted to ſee our habitations any more; but, bleſſed be GOD, we can commit ourſelves to his protection; he has been our protector hitherto, he will be ſo ſtill. Then earneſtly intreat of the LORD to ſupport you under thoſe temptations, which the devil may aſſault you with; he is a powerful adverſary, he is a cunning one too; he would be too hard for us, unleſs we have the ſtrength of CHRIST to be with us. But let us be looking up unto JESUS, that he would ſend his Spirit into our hearts, and keep us from falling. O my dear brethren in CHRIST JESUS, how ſtands it now between GOD and your ſouls? Is JESUS altogether lovely to your ſouls? is he precious unto you? I am ſure, if you have not gone back from CHRIST, he will not from you; he will root out the accurſed things of this world, and dwell in your hearts. You are candidates for heaven; and will you mind earth? What are all the pleaſures of earth, without an intereſt in the LORD JESUS CHRIST? And one ſmile from him is more to be deſired than rubies, yea more than the whole world.

O you who have found JESUS CHRIST aſſiſting you, and ſupporting you under all the temptations of this life, will you forſake him? have you not found him a gracious maſter? is he not the chiefeſt of ten thouſand, and altogether lovely? Now you ſee a form and comelineſs in CHRIST, which you never ſaw before. O! how do you and I wiſh we had known JESUS ſooner, and that we had more of his love; it is condeſcending love, it is amazing, it is forgiving love, it is dying

love, it is exalted and interceding love, and it is glorified love. Methinks when I am talking of the love of JESUS CHRIST, who loved me before I loved him; he ſaw me polluted in blood, full of ſores, a ſlave to ſin, to death and hell, running to deſtruction, then he paſſed by me, and ſaid unto my ſoul, "Live;" he ſnatched me as a brand plucked from the burning. It was love that ſaved me, it was all of the free grace of GOD, and that only. The little experience I have had of this love, makes me amazed at the condeſcenſion, the love, and merciful-neſs of the bleſſed JESUS, that he ſhould have mercy upon ſuch a wretch. O, my brethren, the kingdom of GOD is within me, and this fills me ſo full of love, that I would not be in my natural ſtate again, not for millions of millions of worlds; I long to be with JESUS, to live with the LORD that bought me, to live for ever with the Lamb that was ſlain, and to ſing *Hallelujah*'s unto him. Eternity itſelf will be too ſhort to ſet forth the love of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. I cannot, indeed I cannot forbear ſpeaking again, and again, and again, of the LORD JESUS.

And if there are any here who are ſtrangers to this love of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, do not deſpair; come, come unto CHRIST, and he will have mercy upon you, he will pardon all your ſins, he will heal all your backſlidings, he will love you freely, and take you to be with himſelf. Come therefore, O my guilty brethren, unto JESUS, and you ſhall find reſt for your ſouls. You need not fear, you need not deſpair, when GOD has had mercy upon ſuch a wretch as I; and he will ſave you alſo, if you will come unto him by faith.

Why do ye delay? What! do you ſay, you are poor, and therefore aſhamed to come? It is not your poverty that CHRIST mindeth; come in all your rags, in all your pollution, and he will ſave you. Do not depend upon any thing but the blood of JESUS CHRIST; do not ſtand out an hour longer, but give your hearts to CHRIST, give him the firſtlings of the flock; come unto him now, leſt he ſhould cut you off before you are prepared, and your ſoul be ſent to that pit from whence there is no redemption.

Do not waver, but give him that which he deſires, your hearts; it is the heart the LORD JESUS CHRIST wanteth; and when you have an inward principle wrought in your hearts

by this ſame JESUS, then you will feel the ſweetneſs and pleaſure of communion with GOD. O conſider, my brethren, the love of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in dying for you; and are you reſolved to ſlight his dying love? Your ſins brought CHRIST from heaven, and I humbly pray to the LORD that they may not be a means of ſending you to hell. What language will make you leave your ſins and come to CHRIST? O that I did but know! and that it lay in my power to give you this grace; not one of you, not the greateſt ſcoffer here ſhould go hence before he was changed from a natural to a ſpiritual life; then, then we would rejoice and take ſweet council together; but all this is not in my power: but I tell you where you may have it, even of the LORD JESUS; he will give it to you, if you aſk it of him, for he has told us, "Aſk, and you ſhall receive;" therefore aſk of him, and if you are repulſed again and again, intreat him more, and he will be unto you as he was to the poor *Syrophœnician* woman, who came to CHRIST on account of her daughter; and if ſhe was ſo importunate to him for a body, how much more ſhould we be ſolicitous for our ſouls? If you ſeek to him in faith, his anſwer will be to you as it was to her, "Thy faith hath ſaved thee, be it as thou wouldeſt have it."

O, do not forſake the ſeeking of the LORD; do not, I beſeech you, neglect the opportunities which may be offered to you, for the ſalvation of your ſouls; forſake not the aſſembling of yourſelves together, to build up and confirm and ſtrengthen thoſe who are weak in faith; to convince ſinners, that they may feel the power of GOD pricking them in their hearts, and make them cry out, "What muſt we do to be ſaved?"

The devil and his agents have their clubs of revelling, and their ſocieties of drunkenneſs; they are not aſhamed to be ſeen and heard doing the devil their maſter's works; they are not aſhamed to proclaim him; and ſure you are not aſhamed of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; you dare proclaim that JESUS, who died that you might live, and who will own you before his Father and all the holy angels: Therefore, dare to be ſingularly good; be not afraid of the face of man; let not all the threats of the men of this world move you: what is the loſs of all the grandeur, or pleaſure, or reputation of this

life, compared to the loſs of heaven, of CHRIST and of your ſouls? and as for the reproaches of the world, do not mind them; when they revile you, never, never revile again; do not anſwer railing with railing; but let love, kindneſs, meekneſs, patience, long-ſuffering, be found in you, as they were in the bleſſed JESUS; therefore, I beſeech you, do not neglect the frequent coming together, and telling each other, what great things JESUS CHRIST hath done for your ſouls.

I do not now, as the Phariſees ſay I do, encourage you to leave your lawful callings, and your buſineſs, in which GOD, by his providence, hath placed you; for you have two callings, the one a general, and the other a ſpecial one; it is your duty to regard your familes, and if you neglect them out of any pretence whatſoever, as going to church or to ſocieties, you are out of the way of your duty, and offering that to GOD which he commanded you not. But then, my brethren, you are to take care that the things of this life do not hinder the preparing for that which is to come; let not the buſineſs of the world make you unmindful of your ſouls; but in all your moral actions, in the buſineſs of life, let all be done with a view to the glory of GOD, and the ſalvation of your ſouls.

The night draws on, and obliges me to haſten to a concluſion; though, methinks, I could ſpeak until my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth, yea, until I could ſpeak no more, if it was to ſave your ſouls from the paws of him who ſeeketh to devour them.

Therefore let me beſeech you, in all love and compaſſion: Conſider, you, who are Phariſees; you, who will not come to CHRIST, but are truſting to yourſelves for righteouſneſs; who think, becauſe you lead civil, honeſt, decent lives, all will go well at laſt; but let me tell you, O ye Phariſees, that harlots, murderers, and thieves, ſhall enter the kingdom of GOD before you. Do not flatter yourſelves of being in the way to heaven, when you are in the broad way to hell; but if you will throw away your righteouſneſs and come to CHRIST, and be contented to let JESUS CHRIST do all for you, and in you, then CHRIST is willing to be your Saviour; but if you bring your good works with you, and think to be juſtified on the account of them, you may ſeek to be juſtified by them for ever, and never be juſtified; no, it is only the blood of JESUS that cleanſeth

cleanſeth us from the filth and pollution of all our ſins; and you muſt be ſanctified before you are juſtified. As for good works, we are juſtified before GOD without any reſpect to them, either paſt, preſent, or to come: when we are juſtified, good works will follow our juſtification, for we can do no good works, until we are cleanſed of our pollution, by the ſanctification of the Spirit of GOD.

O ye ſcoffers, come and ſee this JESUS, this LORD of glory whom you have deſpiſed; and if you will but come to CHRIST, he will be willing to receive you, notwithſtanding all the perſecution you have uſed towards his members: However, if you are reſolved to perſiſt in your obſtinacy, remember, ſalvation was offered to you, that CHRIST and free grace were propoſed; but you refuſed to accept of either, and therefore your blood will be required at your own hands.

I ſhall only ſay this unto you, that however you may deſpiſe either me or my miniſtry, I ſhall not regard it, but ſhall frequently ſhew you your danger, and propoſe to you the remedy; and ſhall earneſtly pity and pray for you, that GOD would ſhew you your error, and bring you home into his ſheepfold, that you, from ravenous lions, may become peaceful lambs.

And as for you, O my brethren, who deſire to chuſe CHRIST for your Lord, and to experience his power upon your ſouls, and as yet do not find your deſires and prayers anſwered; go on, and CHRIST will manifeſt himſelf unto you, as he does not unto the world; you ſhall be made to ſee and feel this love of JESUS upon your ſouls; you ſhall have a witneſs in your own breaſt, that you are the LORD's; therefore, do not fear, the LORD JESUS CHRIST will gather you with his elect, when he comes at that great day of accounts, to judge every one according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil: and, O that the thought of anſwering to GOD for all our actions, would make us more mindful about the conſequences that will attend it.

And now let me addreſs all of you, high and low, rich and poor, one with another, to accept of mercy and grace while it is offered to you: Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation; and will you not accept it, now it is offered unto you? do not ſtand out one moment longer; but come

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and accept of JESUS CHRIST in his own way, and then you ſhall be taken up at the laſt day, and be with him for ever and ever: and ſure this ſhould make you deſirous of being with that JESUS who has done ſo much for you, and is now interceding for you, and preparing manſions for you; where may we all arrive and ſit down with JESUS to all eternity!

Which GOD of his infinite mercy grant, &c.

SERMON

SERMON XX.

Worldly buſineſs no Plea for the Neglect of Religion.

MATTHEW viii. 22.

Let the dead bury their dead.

ST. *Paul* preaching at *Athens*, tells them, that as he paſſed by and beheld their devotions, he perceived they were in all things too *ſuperſtitious*. But was this apoſtle to riſe, and come publiſhing the glad tidings of ſalvation in any of our populous cities, he would ſee no reaſon why he ſhould charge the inhabitants with this; but rather as he paſſed by and obſerved the tenor of their life, ſay, I perceive in all things ye are too *worldly-minded*; ye are too eagerly bent on purſuing your lawful buſineſs; ſo eagerly, as either wholly to neglect, or at leaſt too heedleſly to attend on the one thing needful.

There cannot then be a greater charity ſhewn to the chriſtian world, than to ſound an alarm in their ears, and to warn them of the inexpreſſible danger, of continually graſping after the things of this life, without being equally, nay a thouſand times more concerned for their well-being in a future ſtate.

And there is ſtill the more occaſion for ſuch an alarm, becauſe worldly-mindedneſs ſo eaſily and craftily beſets the hearts of men. For out of a ſpecious pretence of ſerving GOD in labouring for the meat which periſheth, they are inſenſibly lulled into ſuch a ſpiritual ſlumber, as ſcarce to perceive their neglect to ſecure that which endureth to everlaſting life.

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The words of the text, if not at firſt view, yet when examined and explained, will be found applicable to this caſe, as containing an admirable caution not to purſue the affairs of this world, at the expence of our happineſs in the next.

They are the words of JESUS CHRIST himſelf: the occaſion of their being ſpoken was this; As he was converſing with thoſe that were gathered round about him, he gave one of them an immediate ſummons to follow him: but he, either afraid to go after ſuch a perſecuted maſter, or rather loving this preſent world, ſays, "Suffer me firſt to go home and bury my father," or, as moſt explain it, let me firſt go and diſpatch ſome important buſineſs I have now in hand. But JESUS ſaid unto him, "Let the dead bury their dead;" leave worldly buſineſs to worldly men, let thy ſecular buſineſs be left undone, rather than thou ſhouldſt neglect to follow me.

Whether this perſon did as he was commanded, I know not; but this I know, that what CHRIST ſaid here in perſon, he has often whiſpered with the ſmall ſtill voice of his holy Spirit, and ſaid to many here preſent, that riſe up early and late take reſt, and eat the bread of carefulneſs, Come draw off your affections from the things of this life; take up your croſs and follow me. But they, willing to juſtify themſelves, make anſwer, LORD, ſuffer us firſt to bury our fathers, or diſpatch our ſecular affairs. I ſay unto all ſuch, "Let the dead bury their dead," let your worldly buſineſs be left undone, rather than you ſhould neglect to follow him.

From the words thus explained, naturally ariſes this propoſition, that no buſineſs, though ever ſo important, can juſtify a neglect of true religion.

The truth of which I ſhall firſt ſhew, and then make an application of it.

I. *Firſt* then, I am to prove, that no temporal buſineſs, though ever ſo important, can juſtify a neglect of true religion.

By the word *religion*, I do not mean any ſet of moral virtues, any partial amendment of ourſelves, or formal attendance on any outward duties whatſoever: but an application of CHRIST's whole and perſonal righteouſneſs, made by faith

to

o our hearts; a thorough real change of nature wrought in us by the inviſible, yet powerful operation of the Holy Ghoſt, preſerved and nouriſhed in our ſouls by a conſtant uſe of all the means of grace, evidenced by a good life, and bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit.

This is true and undefiled religion, and for the perfecting this good work in our hearts, the eternal Son of GOD came down and ſhed his precious blood; for this end were we made, and ſent into the world, and by this alone can we become the ſons of GOD. Were we indeed to judge by the common practice of the world, we might think we were ſent into it for no other purpoſe, than to care and toil for the uncertain riches of this life: but if we conſult the lively oracles, they will inform us, that we were born for nobler ends, even to be born again from above, to be reſtored to the divine likeneſs by JESUS CHRIST, our ſecond *Adam*, and thereby be made meet to inherit the kingdom of heaven; and conſequently, there is an obligation laid upon all, even the moſt buſy people, to ſecure this end; it being an undeniable truth, that all creatures ought to anſwer the end for which they were created.

Some indeed are for confining religion to the clergy, and think it only belongs to thoſe who ſerve at the altar: but what a fatal miſtake is this, ſeeing all perſons are indifferently called by GOD to the ſame ſtate of inward holineſs. As we are all corrupt in our nature, ſo muſt we all be renewed and ſanctified. And though it muſt be granted, that the clergy lie under double obligations to be examples to believers, in faith, zeal, charity, and whatever elſe is commendable and of good report, as being more immediately dedicated to the ſervice of GOD; yet as we have been all baptized with one baptiſm into the death of CHRIST, we are all under the neceſſity of performing our baptiſmal covenant, and perfecting holineſs in the fear of GOD: for the holy ſcriptures point out to us but one way of admiſſion into the kingdom of CHRIST, through the narrow gate of a ſound converſion: and he that does not enter into the ſheepfold, whether clergy or lay-man, by this door, will find, to his everlaſting confuſion, there is no climbing up another way.

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Beſides, what a groſs ignorance of the nature of true religion, as well as of our own happineſs, does ſuch a diſtinction diſcover? For what does our Saviour, by willing us to be religious, require of us? but to ſubdue our corrupt paſſions, to root out ill habits, to engraft the heavenly graces of God's moſt holy Spirit in their room; and, in one word, to fill us with all the fulneſs of GOD.

And will men be ſo much their own enemies, as to affirm this belongs only to thoſe who miniſter in holy things? Does it not equally concern the moſt active man living? Is it the end of religion to make men happy, and is it not every one's privilege to be as happy as he can? Do perſons in buſineſs find the corruptions of their nature, and diſorder of their paſſions, ſo pleaſing, that they care not whether they ever regulate or root them out? Or will they conſent that miniſters ſhall be alone partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light? If not, as they deſire the ſame end, why will they not make uſe of the ſame means? Do they think that GOD will create a new thing upon the earth, and, contrary to the purity of his nature, and immutability of his counſel, admit them into heaven in their natural ſtate, becauſe they have been encumbred about many worldly things? Search the ſcriptures, and ſee if they give any room for ſuch a groundleſs hope.

But farther, one would imagine there was ſomething of the higheſt concern and utmoſt importance in our temporal affairs, that they ſhould divert ſo many from purifying their hearts by faith which is in CHRIST JESUS.

A covetous miſer, who neglects religion by being continually intent on ſeeking great things for himſelf and thoſe of his own houſhold, flatters himſelf he herein acts moſt wiſely; and at the ſame time will cenſure and condemn a young prodigal, who has no time to be devout, becauſe he is ſo perpetually engaged in waſting his ſubſtance by riotous living and following of harlots. But yet a little while, and men will be convinced, that they are as much without excuſe who loſe their ſouls by hunting after riches, as thoſe who loſe them by hunting after ſenſual pleaſures. For though buſineſs may aſſume an air of importance, when compared with other trifling amuſements, yet when put in the balance

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with the loſs of our precious and immortal ſouls, it is equally frivolous, according to that of our Saviour, "What ſhall it profit a man, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul; or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?"

And now what need we any further proof? We have heard the deciſion out of CHRIST's own mouth. But becauſe it is ſo difficult to convince ſuch of this important truth, whoſe hearts are blinded by the deceitfulneſs of riches, that we had need cry out to them in the language of the prophet, "O earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD," I ſhall lay before you one paſſage of ſcripture more, which I could wiſh were written on the tables of all our hearts. In the xivth of St. *Luke*, the 18th and following verſes, our bleſſed LORD puts forth this parable, "A certain man made a great ſupper, and bade many, and ſent his ſervant at ſupper-time, to call them that were bidden: but they all, with one conſent, began to make excuſe. The one ſaid, I have bought a piece of ground, and I muſt needs go and ſee it, I pray thee have me excuſed. And another ſaid, I have bought a yoke of oxen, and I muſt needs go and prove them, I pray thee therefore have me excuſed. So the ſervant returned, and ſhewed his maſter all theſe things." And what follows? Did the maſter accept of their excuſes? No, the text tells us the good man was angry, and ſaid, "that none of thoſe which were bidden, ſhould taſte of his ſupper." And what does this parable teach, but that the moſt lawful callings cannot juſtify our neglect; nay, that they are no longer lawful when they in any wiſe interfere with the great concerns of religion? For the marriage ſupper here ſpoken of, means the goſpel; the maſter of the houſe is CHRIST; the ſervants ſent out, are his miniſters, whoſe duty it is, from time to time, to call the people to this marriage-feaſt, or, in other words, to be religious. Now we find thoſe that were bidden, were very well and honeſtly employed. There was no harm in buying or ſeeing a piece of ground, or in going to prove a yoke of oxen; but here lay their fault, they were doing theſe things, when they were invited to come to the marriage feaſt.

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Without doubt, perſons may very honeſtly and commendably be employed in following their reſpective callings; but yet, if they are engaged ſo deeply in theſe, as to hinder their working out their ſalvation with fear and trembling, they muſt expect the ſame ſentence with their predeceſſors in the parable, that none of them ſhall taſte of CHRIST's ſupper: for our particular calling, as of this or that profeſſion, muſt never interfere with our general and precious calling, as chriſtians. Not that chriſtianity calls us entirely out of the world, the holy ſcriptures warrant no ſuch doctrine.

It is very remarkable, that in the book of life, we find ſome almoſt of all kinds of occupations, who notwithſtanding ſerved GOD in their reſpective generations, and ſhone as ſo many lights in the world. Thus we hear of a good centurion in the evangeliſts, and a devout *Cornelius* in the *Acts*; a pious lawyer; and ſome that walked with GOD, even of *Nero*'s houſhold, in the epiſtles; and our divine maſter himſelf, in his check to *Martha*, does not condemn her for minding, but for being cumbered or perplexed about many things.

No, you may, nay, you muſt labour, out of obedience to GOD, even for the meat which periſheth.

But I come, in the *Second* place, to apply what has been ſaid.

I beſeech you, by the mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, let not your concern for the meat which periſheth be at the expence of that which endureth to everlaſtiug life; for, to repeat our bleſſed Saviour's words, "What ſhall it profit a man, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul; or, what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?"

Were we always to live in the world, then worldly wiſdom would be our higheſt wiſdom: but foraſmuch as we have here no continuing city, and were only ſent into this world to have our natures changed, and to fit ourſelves for that which is to come; then to neglect this important work for a little worldly gain, what is it but, with profane *Eſau*, to ſell our birth-right for a meſs of pottage.

Alas! how unlike are chriſtians to chriſtianity! they are commanded to "ſeek firſt the kingdom of GOD and his righteouſneſs," and all other real neceſſaries ſhall be added unto them; but they are fearful (O men of little faith!) that if they ſhould do ſo, all other neceſſaries would be taken from them.

iem: they are ſtrictly forbidden to be careful for the morrow, nd yet they reſt not night or day, but are continually heaping up riches for many years, though they know not who hall gather them. Is this acting like perſons that are ſtrangers and pilgrims upon earth? Is this keeping their baptiſmal ow? Or rather, is it not directly apoſtatizing from it, and leſerting the ſervice of JESUS CHRIST, to liſt themſelves under the banner of mammon?

But what will be the hope of ſuch worldlings, when GOD ſhall take away their ſouls? What if the almighty ſhould ſay to each of them, as he did to the rich fool in the goſpel, "this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee;" O then, what would all thoſe things profit them, which they are now ſo buſy in providing?

Was eternal life, that free gift of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, to be purchaſed with money; or could men carry their ſtocks beyond the grave, to buy oil for their lamps, i. e. grace for their hearts, when they ſhould be called to meet the bridegroom, there might be ſome reaſon why GOD might well bear with them: but ſince their money is to periſh with them; ſince it is certain, as they brought nothing into the world, ſo they can carry nothing out; or ſuppoſing they could, ſince there is no oil to be bought, no grace to be purchaſed when once the lamp of their natural life is gone out; would it not be much more prudent to ſpend the ſhort time they have here allotted them, in buying oil while it may be had, and not for fear of having a little leſs of that which will quickly be another man's, eternally loſe the true riches?

What think you? Is it to be ſuppoſed, it grieved that covetous worldling before mentioned, when his ſoul ſprung into the world of ſpirits, that he could not ſtay here till he had pulled down his barns and built greater? Or think you not that all things here below ſeemed equally little to him then, and he only repented that he had not employed more time in pulling down every high thought that exalted itſelf againſt the Almighty, and building up his ſoul in the knowledge and fear of GOD?

And thus it will be with all unhappy men, who like him are diſquieting themſelves in a vain purſuit after worldly riches, and at the ſame time are not rich towards GOD.

They may, for a ſeaſon, ſeem excellently well employed in being ſolicitouſly careful about the important concerns of this life; but when once their eyes are opened by death, and their ſouls launched into eternity, they will then ſee the littleneſs of all ſublunary cares, and wonder they ſhould be ſo beſotted to the things of another life, while they were, it may be, applauded for their great wiſdom and profound ſagacity in the affairs of this world.

Alas! how will they bemoan themſelves for acting like the unjuſt ſteward, ſo very wiſely in their temporal concerns, in calling their reſpective debtors ſo carefully, and aſking how much every one owes to them, and yet never remembring to call themſelves to an account, or enquire how much they owed to their own great LORD and maſter?

And now what ſhall I ſay more? The GOD of this world, and the inordinate deſire of other things, muſt have wholly ſtifled the conſcience of that man, who does not ſee the force of theſe plain reaſonings.

Permit me only to add a word or two to the rich, and to perſons that are freed from the buſineſs of this life.

But here I muſt pauſe a while, for I am ſenſible that it is but an ungrateful, and as ſome may imagine, an aſſuming thing, for ſuch a novice in religion to take upon him to inſtruct men in high ſtations, and who perhaps would diſdain to ſet me with the dogs of their flock.

But however, ſince St. *Paul*, who knew what beſt became a young preacher, commanded *Timothy*, young as he was, to exhort and charge the rich with all authority; I hope none here that are ſo, will be offended, if with humility I beg leave to remind them, though they once knew this, that if perſons in the moſt buſy employs are indiſpenſibly obliged to "work out their ſalvation with fear and trembling," much more ought they to do ſo, who are free from the toils and incumbrance of a lower way of life, and conſequently have greater opportunities and leiſure to prepare themſelves for a future ſtate.

But is this really the caſe? or do we not find, by fatal experience, that too many of thoſe whom GOD has exalted above their brethren, who are "cloathed in purple and fine linnen, and fare ſumptuouſly every day," by a ſad abuſe of

God's great bounty towards them, think that their ſtations ſet them above religion, and ſo let the poor, who live by the ſweat of their brows, attend more conſtantly on the means of grace than do they?

But woe unto ſuch rich men! for they have received their conſolation. Happy had it been if they had never been born: for if the careleſs irreligious tradeſman cannot be ſaved, where will luxurious and wicked gentlemen appear?

Let me therefore, by way of concluſion, exhort all perſons, high and low, rich and poor, one with another, to make the renewal of their fallen nature, the one buſineſs of their lives; and to let no worldly profit, no worldly pleaſure, divert them from the thoughts of it. Let this cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh," be ever ſounding in our ears; and let us live as creatures that are every moment liable to be hurried away by death to judgment: let us remember, that this life is a ſtate of infinite importance, a point between two eternities, and that after theſe few days are ended, there will remain no more ſacrifice for ſin; let us be often aſking ourſelves, how we ſhall wiſh we had lived when we leave the world? And then we ſhall always live in ſuch a ſtate, as we ſhall never fear to die in. Whether we live, we ſhall live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we ſhall die unto the Lord; ſo that living or dying we may be the Lord's.

To which end, let us beſeech God, the protector of all them that put their truſt in him, without whom nothing is ſtrong, nothing is holy, to increaſe and multiply upon us his mercy, that he being our ruler and guide, we may ſo paſs through things temporal, that we finally loſe not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON XXI.

CHRIST the only Reſt for the Weary and Heavy-Laden.

MATTHEW xi. 28.

Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.

NOTHING is more generally known than the duties which belong to chriſtianity; and yet, how amazing is it, nothing is leſs practiſed? There is much of it in name and ſhew, but little of it in the heart and converſation; indeed, if going to church, and to the ſacrament, or, if our being called after the name of CHRIST, and being baptized into that name; if that will make us chriſtians, I believe all of us would have a claim thereto: but if it conſiſts in the heart, that there muſt be an inward principle wrought in us by faith; that there muſt be a change of the whole nature, a putting off the old man with his deeds, a turning from ſin unto GOD, a cleaving only unto the Son of Righteouſneſs; and that there muſt be a new birth, and we experience the pangs thereof; and that you muſt feel yourſelves weary and heavy laden with your ſins, before you will ſeek for deliverance from them; if this is to be the caſe, if there is ſo much in being children of GOD, alas! how many who pleaſe themſelves with an outſide ſhew, a name to live whilſt they are dead; and how few that have any ſhare in this ſpiritual ſtate, in this true and living name? How few are they who are weary and heavy laden with their ſins, and ſeek to CHRIST for reſt? They ſay, in a formal cuſtomary manner, we are ſinners, and there is no health in us; but how few feel themſelves

elves ſinners, and are ſo oppreſt in their own ſpirits, that ney have no quiet nor reſt in them, becauſe of the burden of neir ſins, and the weight that is fallen and lays on their ninds?

Under theſe burdens, theſe heavy burdens, they are at a oſs what to do whereby they may obtain reſt; they fly to heir works, they go to a miniſter, and he tells them to ead, to pray, and meditate, and take the ſacrament: thus hey go away, and read, and pray, and meditate almoſt with ut ceaſing, and never neglect the ſacrament whenever there is n opportunity for the taking of it. Well, when the poor oul has done all this, it ſtill finds no eaſe, there is yet no re-ief: Well, what muſt you do then? To lie ſtill under the urden they cannot, and to get rid of it they cannot: O what nuſt the burdened ſoul do! Why, goes to the clergyman gain, and tells him the caſe, and what it has done, and that t is no better. Well, he aſks, have you given alms to the oor? Why no. Then go and do that, and you will find eſt. Thus the poor ſinner is hurried from duty to duty, and ill finds no reſt: all things are uneaſy and diſquiet within, nd there remains no reſt in the ſoul. And if it was to go hrough all the duties of religion, and read over a thouſand anuals of prayers, none would ever give the ſoul any reſt; othing will, until it goes to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, for ere is the only true reſt; that is the reſt which abideth, and ill continue for ever. It is not in your own works, nor in our endeavours: no; when CHRIST comes into your ſouls, e pardons you, without any reſpect to your works, either aſt, preſent, or to come.

From the words, my brethren, I have now read, I ſhall

I. Shew you who are the weary and heavy laden.

II. Inquire what is meant by coming to CHRIST. And,

III. Conclude with exhorting you to accept of the invitation which the LORD JESUS CHRIST gives unto you to come unto him, with the aſſurance of finding reſt.

Firſt, I am to ſhew you, who are the weary and heavy-len.

And here it will be neceſſary to conſider who are not; and then, to conſider who they are that are really ſo.

1. Thoſe who think themſelves good enough, and are pleaſed that they are not ſo bad as others, theſe are not weary or heavy laden.

No, theſe Phariſees are not thus troubled; they laugh and jeſt at thoſe who talk of feeling their ſins, and think there is no occaſion to make ſo much ado about religion: it is to be righteous over-much, and the means to deſtroy yourſelves. They think if they do but mean well, and ſay their prayers, as they call them, it is ſufficient: though they may ſay a prayer, yea, thouſands of prayers, and all the while be only offering up the ſacrifice of fools. They may call GOD, Father, every day, when it is only mocking of GOD, and offering up falſe fire unto him; and it would be juſt for him to ſerve them, as he did *Nahab* and *Abihu*, deſtroy them, cut them off from the face of the earth: but he is waiting to be gracious, and willing to try a little longer, whether you will bring forth any thing more than the leaves of an outward profeſſion, which is not all that the LORD requires; no, he wants the heart; and unleſs you honour him with that, he does not regard your mouths, when the other is far from him. You may ſay over your prayers all your lives, and yet you may never pray over one; therefore, while you flatter yourſelves you are good enough, and that you are in a ſtate of ſalvation, you are only deceiving your own ſouls, and haſtening on your own deſtruction. Come unto him, not as being good enough, but as vile ſinners, as poor, and blind, and naked, and miſerable, and then JESUS will have compaſſion.

O ye Phariſees, what fruits do ye bring forth? Why, you are moral, polite creatures; you do your endeavours, you do what you can, and ſo JESUS is to make up the reſt. You eſteem yourſelves fine, rational, and polite beings, and think it is too unfaſhionable to pray; it is not polite enough: perhaps you have read ſome prayers, but knew not how to pray from your hearts; no, by no means: that was being righteous over-much indeed.

But when once you are ſenſible of your being loſt, damned creatures, and ſee hell gaping ready to receive you; if GOD was but to cut the thread of life, O then, then you would cry earneſtly

earneſtly unto the LORD to receive you, to open the door of mercy unto you; your tones would then be changed, you would no more flatter yourſelves with your abilities and good wiſhes: no, you would ſee how unable you were, how incapable to ſave yourſelves; that there is no fitneſs, no free will in you: no fitneſs, but for eternal damnation, no free will but that of doing evil; and that when you would do good, evil is preſent with you, and the thing that ye would not, that do ye. He knows the ſecret intent of every heart; and this is a pleaſure to you, my dear brethren, who come on purpoſe to meet with him, though it be in a field. And, however ſome may eſteem me a mountebank, and an enthuſiaſt, one that is only going to make you methodically mad; they may breathe out their invectives againſt me, yet CHRIST knows all; he takes notice of it, and I ſhall leave it to him to plead my cauſe, for he is a gracious Maſter: I have already found him ſo, and am ſure he will continue ſo. Vengeance is his, and he will repay it. Let them revile me; let them caſt me out of their ſynagogues, and have my name in reproach, I ſhall not anſwer them by reviling again, or in ſpeaking evil againſt them: no, that is not the Spirit of CHRIST, but meekneſs, patience, long-ſuffering, kindneſs, &c.

Ye phariſees, who are going about to eſtabliſh your own righteouſneſs; you, who are too polite to follow the LORD JESUS CHRIST in ſincerity and truth; you, who are all for a little ſhew, a little outſide work; who lead moral, civil, decent lives, CHRIST will not know you at the great day, but will ſay unto you, O ye Phariſees, was there any place for me in your love? Alas! you are full of anger and malice, and ſelf-will; yet you pretended to love and ſerve me, and to be my people: but, however, I deſpiſe you; I, who am GOD, and knoweth the ſecret of all hearts; I, who am truth itſelf, the faithful and true witneſs, ſay unto you, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, into that place of torment, prepared for the devil and his angels." Good GOD! and muſt theſe diſcreet polite creatures, who never did any one harm, but led ſuch civil, decent lives, muſt they ſuffer the vengeance of eternal fire? Cannot their righteous ſouls be ſaved? Where then muſt the ſinner and the ungodly appear? Where wilt thou, O ſabbath-breaker, appear, thou, who canſt take thy

pleaſure, thy recreation, on the LORD's-day, who refuſeſt to hear the word of GOD, who wilt not come to church to be inſtructed in the ways of the LORD? Where will you, O ye adulterers, fornicators, and ſuch-like of this generation appear? Whoremongers and adulterers GOD will judge, and them he will condemn. Then you will not call theſe tricks of youth: no, but you will call on the rocks and the mountains to fall on you, to hide you from the fury and anger of the LORD. Where wilt thou, O man, appear, that takes pleaſure in making a mock of ſin, who deſpiſeſt all reproof, who throws about thy jeſts as a madman does fire, and aſks whether thou art not in ſport? Where wilt thou, O man, appear, that makes it thy buſineſs to preach againſt the children of the Moſt High; thou, who art inventing methods in order to ſtop the progreſs of the goſpel, and uſing thy utmoſt power to quaſh the preaching thereof; who art raiſing of evil reports againſt the diſciples of CHRIST, and eſteemeſt them madmen, fools, ſchiſmatics, and a parcel of rabble? Thou, O man, with all thy letter-learning, wilt ſurely ſee the judgment-ſeat of CHRIST, though, perhaps, ſorely againſt your will; to be caſt by him into eternal fire, a place prepared for the devil and his angels. There is a burning tophet kindled by the fury of an avenging GOD, which will never, never be quenched. The devil longs to embrace you in his helliſh arms, whenever the ſentence is paſt, where you muſt for ever bear the weight of your ſin: there is no redemption then; the day of grace is paſt; the door of hope is ſhut; mercy will be no more offered, but you muſt be ſhut out from GOD for ever. O who can dwell with everlaſting burnings!

However you may think of hell, indeed it is not a painted fire; it is not an imagination to keep people in awe: then, then you will feel the power of the almighty arm. If you will not lay hold on his golden ſceptre, he will break you with his iron rod. O ye Phariſees, who are now ſo good, ſo much better than others, how will ye ſtand before CHRIST, when dreſt in his glory as judge? You Arians, may now deſpiſe his divinity; then you ſhall have a proof of it; he will ſhew, that he has all power, and that he was no ſubordinate GOD; he will ſhew you that he has all power in heaven

and

and earth; that he was King of kings, and Lord of lords; that he was the mighty GOD, the everlasting Father; and this power that he has, he will exercise in preserving you to no other end, but to punish you for ever. Thus you, who please yourselves with being good enough now, who are not weary and heavy laden with a sense of your sins here, will be weary and heavy laden with a sense of your punishment hereafter.

2. Those, my brethren, are not weary and heavy laden with a sense of their sins, who can delight themselves in the polite entertainments of the age, and follow the sinful diversions of life.

Now they can go to balls and assemblies, play-houses and horse-racing; they have no thought of their sins; they know not what it is to weep for sin, or humble themselves under the mighty hand of GOD; they can laugh away their sorrows, and sing away their cares, and drive away these melancholy thoughts; they are too polite to entertain any sad thoughts; the talk of death and judgment is irksome to them, because it damps their mirth; they could not endure to think of their sin and danger; they could not go to a play, and think of hell; they could not go quietly to a masquerade, and think of their danger; they could not go to a ball or an assembly in peace, if they thought of their sins.

And so it is proved, even to a demonstration, that these are not weary and heavy laden: for if they are not thoughtful about their sins, they will never be weary and heavy laden of them. But at the day of judgment all will be over: they shall lose all their carnal mirth, all their pleasure, all their delight will be gone for ever.

They will say then of their laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, What dost thou? Their merry conceits, and witty jests against the poor despised people of GOD, are then over. Their mirth was but as the crackling of thorns under a pot; it made a great blaze and unseemly noise for a while, but it was presently gone, and will return no more.

They think now, that if they were to fast or to pray, and meditate and mourn, they should be righteous over much, and destroy themselves; their lives would be a continual trouble, and it would make them run mad. Alas, my brethren, what misery must that life be, where there is no more pleasant days,

no

no more balls or plays, no cards or dice, thoſe waſters of precious time, no horſe-racing and cock-fighting, from whence no good ever came, unleſs abuſing GOD Almighty's creatures, and putting them to that uſe which he never deſigned them, can be called ſo. How miſerable will your life be, when all your joys are over, when your pleaſures are all paſt, and no more mirth or paſtime? Do you think there is one merry heart in hell? one pleaſing countenance? or jeſting, ſcoffing, ſwearing tongue? A ſermon now is irkſome: the offer of ſalvation, by the blood of JESUS CHRIST, is now termed enthuſiaſm; but then you would give thouſands of worlds, if in your power, for one tender of mercy, for one offer of grace, which now you ſo much deſpiſe.

Now, you are not weary of your diverſions, nor are you heavy laden with the ſins, with which they are accompanied; but then you will be weary of your puniſhment, and the aggravation which attends it. Your cards and dice, your hawks and hounds, and bowls, and your pleaſant ſports, will then be over. What mirth will you have in remembering your ſports and diverſions? I would not have you miſtake me, and ſay, I am only preaching death and damnation to you; I am only ſhewing you what will be the conſequence of continuing in theſe ſinful pleaſures; and if the devil does not hurry you away with half a ſermon, I ſhall ſhew you how to avoid theſe dangers, which I now preach up as the effect of ſin unrepented of. I mention this, leſt you ſhould be hurried away by the devil: but be not offended, if I point out unto you more of the terrors which will attend your following theſe polite and faſhionable entertainments of the preſent age, and of not being weary and heavy laden with a ſenſe of your ſins.

They who delight in drinking wine to exceſs, and who are drunkards, what bitter draughts will they have inſtead of wine and ale? The heat of luſt will be then alſo abated; they will no more ſing the ſong of the drunkard; no more ſpend their time in courting their miſtreſſes, in laſcivious diſcourſe, in amorous ſongs, in wanton dalliances, in bruiſh defilements: no, theſe are all over; and it will but prick each other to the heart to look one another in the face. Then they will wiſh, that inſtead of ſinning together, they had

prayed

prayed together; had frequented religious ſocieties; had ſtirred up each other to love and holineſs, and endeavoured to convince each other of the evil of ſin, and how obnoxious they are to the wrath of GOD; and the neceſſity of being weary and heavy laden with a ſenſe thereof; that they might have eſcaped the puniſhment which they ſuffer, by their following the ſinful and polite diverſions of the age they fell into. But as it was againſt GOD himſelf they had ſinned, ſo no leſs than GOD will puniſh them for their offences: he hath prepared theſe torments for his enemies; his continual anger will ſtill be devouring of them; his breath of indignation will kindle the flame; his wrath will be a continual burden to their ſouls. Woe be to him who falls under the ſtroke of the Almighty!

Thus they are not weary and heavy laden with their ſins, who can follow the polite and faſhionable entertainments of the age. But,

Secondly, I am to ſhew you what it is to be weary and heavy laden with ſins. And

1. You may be ſaid, my brethren, to be weary and heavy laden, when your ſins are grievous unto you, and it is with grief and trouble you commit them.

You, who are awakened unto a ſenſe of your ſins, who ſee how hateful they are to GOD, and how they lay you open to his wrath and indignation, and would willingly avoid them; who hate yourſelves for committing them; when you are thus convinced of ſin, when you ſee the terrors of the law, and are afraid of his judgments; then you may be ſaid to be weary of your ſins. And O how terrible do they appear when you are firſt awakened to a ſenſe of them; when you ſee nothing but the wrath of GOD ready to fall upon you, and you are afraid of his judgments! O how heavy is your ſin to you then! Then you feel the weight thereof, and that it is grievous to be borne.

2. When you are obliged to cry out under the burden of your ſins, and know not what to do for relief; when this is your caſe, you are weary of your ſins. It does not conſiſt in a wearineſs all of a ſudden: no, it is the continual burden of your ſoul, it is your grief and concern that you cannot live without offending GOD, and ſinning againſt him; and theſe

ſins

ſins are ſo many and ſo great, that you fear they will not be forgiven.

I come, *Secondly*, to ſhew you what is meant by coming to CHRIST.

It is not, my brethren, coming with your own works: no, you muſt come in full dependance upon the LORD JESUS CHRIST, looking on him as the LORD who died to ſave ſinners: Go to him, tell him you are loſt, undone, miſerable ſinners, and that you deſerve nothing but hell; and when you thus go to the LORD JESUS CHRIST out of yourſelf, in full dependance on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, you will find him an able and a willing ſaviour: he is pleaſed to ſee ſinners coming to him in a ſenſe of their own unworthineſs; and when their caſe ſeems to be moſt dangerous, moſt diſtreſſed, then the LORD in his mercy ſteps in and gives you his grace; he puts his Spirit within you, takes away your heart of ſtone, and gives you a heart of fleſh. Stand not out then againſt this LORD, but go unto him, not in your own ſtrength, but in the ſtrength of JESUS CHRIST.

And this brings me, *Thirdly*, to conſider the exhortation CHRIST gives unto all of you, high and low, rich and poor, one with another, to come unto him that you may have reſt. And if JESUS CHRIST gives you reſt, you may be ſure it will be a reſt indeed; it will be ſuch a reſt as your ſoul wants; it will be a reſt which the world can neither give nor take away. O come all of ye this night, and you ſhall find reſt: JESUS CHRIST hath promiſed it. Here is a gracious invitation, and do not let a little rain hurry you away from the hearing of it; do but conſider what the devil and damned ſpirits would give to have the offer of mercy, and to accept of CHRIST, that they may be delivered from the torments they labour under, and muſt do ſo for ever; or, how pleaſing would this rain be to them to cool their parched tongues; but they are denied both, while you have mercy offered to you; free and rich mercy to come to CHRIST: here is food for your ſouls, and the rain is to bring forth the fruits of the earth, as food for your bodies. Here is mercy upon mercy.

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Let me beſeech you to come unto CHRIST, and he will give you reſt: you ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls. O you, my weary, burthened brethren, do but go to CHRIST in this manner, and though you go to him weary, you ſhall find reſt before you come from him: let not any thing ſhort of the LORD JESUS CHRIST be your reſt; for wherever you ſeek you will be diſappointed; but if you do but ſeek unto the LORD JESUS CHRIST, there you will find a fulneſs of every thing which your weary ſoul wants. Go to him this night; here is an invitation to all you who are weary ſouls. He does not call you, O Phariſees; no, it is only you weary ſinners; and ſure you will not ſtay from him, but accept of his invitation; do not delay; one moment may be dangerous: death may take you off ſuddenly. You know not but that a fit of the apoplexy may hurry you from time into eternity: therefore, be not for ſtaying till you have ſomething to bring; come in all your rags, in all your filthineſs, in all your diſtreſſes, and you will ſoon find JESUS CHRIST ready to help, and to relieve you: he loves you as well in your rags, as in your beſt garments; he regards not your dreſs; no, do but come unto him, and you ſhall ſoon find reſt for your ſouls.

What ſay you? Shall I tell my Maſter you will come unto him, and that you will accept him on his own terms. Let me, my brethren, beſeech you to take JESUS without any thing of your own righteouſneſs: for if you expect to mix any thing of yourſelf with CHRIST, you build upon a ſandy foundation; but if you take CHRIST for your reſt, he will be that unto you. Let me beſeech you to build upon this rock of ages. O my brethren, think of the gracious invitation, "Come unto me," to JESUS CHRIST: it is he that calls you: And will you not go?

Come, come unto him. If your ſouls were not immortal, and you in danger of loſing them, I would not thus ſpeak unto you; but the love of your ſouls conſtrains me to ſpeak: methinks this would conſtrain me to ſpeak unto you for ever. Come then by faith, and lay hold of the LORD JESUS: though he be in heaven, he now calleth thee. Come, all ye drunkards, ſwearers, ſabbath-breakers, adulterers, fornicators; come, all ye ſcoffers, harlots, thieves, and murderers, and

JESUS CHRIST will ſave you; he will give you reſt, if you are weary of your ſins. O come lay hold upon him. Had I leſs love for your ſouls, I might ſpeak leſs; but that love of GOD, which is ſhed abroad in my heart, will not permit me to leave you, till I ſee whether you will come to CHRIST or no. O for your life receive him, for fear he may never call you any more. Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; it may be this night the cry may be made. How would you bear this, if you were ſure to die before the morning light? GOD grant you may begin to live, that when the king of terrors ſhall come, you may have nothing to do but to commit your ſouls into the hands of a faithful Redeemer.

Now to GOD the Father, GOD the Son, and GOD the Holy Ghoſt, be all honour, praiſes, dominion, and power, henceforth and for evermore, *Amen*, *Amen*.

SERMON

SERMON XXII.

The Folly and Danger of parting with CHRIST for the Pleaſures and Profits of Life.

MATTHEW viii. 23, to the End.

And when he was entered into a ſhip, his diſciples followed him. And behold, there aroſe a great tempeſt in the ſea, inſomuch that the ſhip was covered with the waves: But he was aſleep. And his diſciples came to him, and awoke him, ſaying, Lord, ſave us, we periſh. And he ſaith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he aroſe and rebuked the winds and the ſea, and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, ſaying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the ſea obey him! And when he was come to the other ſide into the country of the Gergeſenes, *there met him two poſſeſſed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, ſo that no man might paſs by that way. And behold, they cried out, ſaying, What have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was, a good way off from them, an herd of many ſwine, feeding. So the devils beſought him, ſaying, If thou caſt us out, ſuffer us to go away into the herd of ſwine. And he ſaid unto them, Go: And when they were come out, they went into the herd of ſwine; and behold, the whole herd of ſwine ran violently down a ſteep place into the ſea, and periſhed in the waters. And they that kept them, fled and went their ways into the city, and told every thing; and what was befallen to the poſſeſſed of the devils. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jeſus, and when they ſaw him, they beſought him that he would depart out of their coaſts.*

IF we were but ſenſible of the great neceſſity there is, in this our day, of being real chriſtians, ſure we ſhould not be contented with being nominal ones; but we are ſunk into I know not what; we are no better than baptiſed heathens: And

And how amazing is it, that we ſhould profeſs the name of CHRIST, and yet ſo little converſe about him; ſurely, this name whereby we are called, ſhould be the theme of our diſcourſe here, and of our eternal *Hallelujahs* in a world to come. But is it not more amazing, to conſider, that inſtead of the name of JESUS, whereby we are to have ſalvation, we are taught to look for it in ourſelves, and that there muſt be a fitneſs in us before GOD beſtows his grace and favour upon us. But what doctrine is this? Not the doctrine of the ſcripture, not the doctrine of JESUS, not that of the primitive chriſtians, not that of the reformation, nor that of the articles of the church of *England:* No, it is the doctrine of the devil: this is making CHRIST but half a Saviour, and driving man into an error of the greateſt conſequence, in making him go to JESUS in his own ſtrength, and not in the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST: But, my brethren, unleſs you go in the ſtrength of JESUS CHRIST; unleſs you depend only upon him for ſalvation; unleſs he is your wiſdom, righteouſneſs and ſanctification, he will never be your redemption. Our ſalvation is the free gift of GOD; it is owing to his free love, and the free grace of JESUS CHRIST, that ever you are ſaved.

Do not flatter yourſelves of being good enough, becauſe you are morally ſo; becauſe you go to church, ſay the prayers, and take the ſacrament, therefore you think no more is required: alas, you are deceiving your own ſouls; and if GOD, in his free grace and mercy, does not ſhew you your error, it will only be leading you a ſofter way to your eternal ruin; but GOD forbid that any of you, to whom I am now ſpeaking, ſhould imagine this; no, you muſt be abaſed, and GOD muſt be exalted, or you will never begin at the right end, you will never ſee JESUS with comfort or ſatisfaction, unleſs you go to him only on the account of what he has done and ſuffered.

Is it not plain to a demonſtration, that we are acting the part of the *Gergeſenes*, who came and deſired JESUS to depart from them: Let us conſider the words, and then we ſhall ſee how exactly we are performing the part of theſe men over again.

And when he was entered into a ſhip his diſciples followed him.

CHRIST

CHRIST had been working of many miracles, as we may read a few verſes before; and as he continually went about doing good, ſo now he was going to the country of the *Gergeſenes* to diſpoſſeſs two, who were poſſeſſed with devils; and his diſciples followed him: No doubt they were reproached and pointed at, for following ſuch a babbler, as the Scribes and Phariſees eſteemed the LORD JESUS CHRIST: Doubtleſs they were pointed at, jeered, ſcoffed, and eſteemed madmen, enthuſiaſts, and a parcel of rabble; but ſtill they followed the LORD JESUS CHRIST, they did not mind a little reproach; no, they loved their Maſter too well to forbear following him for the ſake of a little perſecution. And if you do but love the LORD JESUS CHRIST, love him above all, you will follow him in ſpight of the malice of all the Scribes and Phariſees of this generation.

And behold there aroſe a great tempeſt on the ſea.

The preſence of CHRIST in the ſhip, did not preſerve the diſciples from fears and troubles; they were filled with uneaſineſs, although CHRIST was with them: this was only for a trial of their faith, to ſee if they would ſtand faſt for the LORD in a perſecuting time. My dear brethren, if the LORD is trying of you, do not give out; no, ſtand faſt in all that the LORD may call you to ſuffer: It is eaſy to follow CHRIST when all things are ſafe: but your love to JESUS CHRIST would be ſeen more, if you muſt loſe your lives, or deny your JESUS; it would be a trial of your love, when fire and faggot was before you, if you would ruſh into that, rather than flie from the truth as it is in JESUS. Though all things are calm now, the ſtorm is gathering, and by and by it will break; it is at preſent no bigger than a man's hand; but when it is full it will break, and then you will ſee whether you are found chriſtians or not. Perſecution would ſcatter the hypocrites, and make nominal chriſtians afraid to worſhip GOD; they would then ſoon turn unto the world and the things of it.

And his diſciples came to him, and awoke him, ſaying, LORD, ſave us, we periſh. And he ſaith unto them; Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he aroſe and rebuked the winds and the ſea, and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, ſaying,

What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the ſea obey him!

Here we may ſee the great compaſſion of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; no ſooner had the diſciples awakened him, and he ſaw their danger, but he rebuked the winds and ſeas, and all things were calm: Thus it was in a natural way, and will be ſo in a ſpiritual one; for no ſooner does JESUS CHRIST ſpeak peace to a troubled ſoul, but all is calm and quiet: Now none but GOD could have performed this great miracle, and therefore it is no wonder that his diſciples and the men of the ſhip were amazed to ſee the wonders he performed; and they could not forbear to expreſs their ſenſe thereof, by inquiring, "What manner of man is this!"

And when the LORD has brought you out of trouble, you will be amazed at the gracious dealings of the LORD with you, and wonder that he would ſo eaſily remove your troubles from you, when you have deſerved nothing but wrath and deſtruction, and to be puniſhed to all eternity.

And when he was come to the other ſide into the country of the Gergeſenes, *there met him two poſſeſſed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, ſo that no man might paſs by that way. And behold, they cried out, ſaying, What have we to do with thee,* JESUS, *thou Son of* GOD? *Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?*

Two men, who were poſſeſſed bodily with that evil one who is going about ſeeking whom he may devour, met JESUS; as ſoon as they ſaw him they were afraid, and creid out: though they made every one afraid of them, yet they no ſooner ſaw CHRIST, but their power left them, and they cried out, "What have we to do with thee, JESUS, thou Son of GOD?" We know that thou art GOD; we do not want thee, we have no power over thee, but thou haſt over us, and we fear thou art come to torment us before our time; we know that we are to be brought to judgment, and therefore we would not be tormented until that time come.

And there was, a good way off from them, a herd of many ſwine feeding. So the devils beſought him, ſaying, If thou caſt us out, ſuffer us to go into the herd of ſwine.

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The evil ſpirits were ſenſible that CHRIST was come to diſpoſſeſs them, and that their time was now come, when they muſt leave the bodies of theſe two men; for when CHRIST comes, who is ſtronger than the ſtrong man armed, all muſt fall before him; they could not ſtand againſt the power of CHRIST: And here we may obſerve, that though the devil is an enemy, yet he is a chained one; he cannot hurt a poor ſwine until he has power given him from above: and we may likewiſe ſee the malice of the devil, that he would hurt a poor ſwine rather than do no miſchief; and the devil would, if in his power, deſtroy each of your ſouls, but CHRIST, by his mighty power, prevents him.

And he ſaid unto them, Go: And when they were come out, they went into the herd of ſwine; and behold, the whole herd of ſwine ran violently down a ſteep place into the ſea, and periſhed in the waters. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the poſſeſſed of the devils. And behold, the whole city came out to meet JESUS, *and when they ſaw him, they beſought him that he would depart out of their coaſts.*

Here obſerve, that no ſooner had CHRIST given the devils permiſſion to enter the ſwine, but they did, and their malice was ſo great, that the ſwine ran violently down a ſteep place into the ſea, and were drowned.

What poor ſpite was here, that the devil ſhould diſturb poor ſwine! And the city, therefore, was ſo grieved for the loſs of a little wealth, that they came and beſought CHRIST to depart; they did not want his company; they preferred a few poor ſwine before the company of CHRIST; a few worldly goods, a little pleaſure, or any thing rather than CHRIST, part with CHRIST before any thing; but one, who is ſenſible of the love of CHRIST, will part with all, rather than with the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Thus far the letter of the ſtory goes; perhaps you think there is nothing to be learned herefrom, and that this is all you are to underſtand by it; but if ſo, my brethren, you are much miſtaken; for here is an excellent leſſon to be learned, and that you will ſee, by conſidering the words again, in a ſpiritual ſenſe.

And behold, there aroſe a great tempeſt in the ſea, inſomuch that the ſhip was covered with the waves: but he was aſleep.

And do not you frequently experience great tempeſts in this world? does not the ſea of temptation beat over your ſouls? you are afraid leſt you ſhould be overcome by them; you can ſee no way to eſcape, for your ſouls are covered with waves, and you expect to be ſwallowed up in the tempeſt; you are afraid leſt you ſhould fall into the hands of the evil one. O do not fear, for JESUS CHRIST, though he may be aſleep to your thinking, yet will keep you, he will preſerve you from the raging of the men, of the Phariſees of this world; they may rage and ſpit forth all their venom againſt you, ſtill CHRIST will deliver, preſerve and protect you; if you but ſeek unto him in a ſenſe of your own helpleſsneſs and unworthineſs, you will ſoon find he is a GOD ready to pardon and forgive. O that all that hear me would be perſuaded to bow their knee, and their hearts, as ſoon as they go home: but alas, how many of our chriſtians go to GOD, day by day, and call him, Father, which is but mocking of GOD, when the devil is their father: None have a right to call him father, but thoſe who have received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby they have a right to call him, "Abba, Father." Could the brute beaſts ſpeak, they might call GOD father as well as ſome of you; for he is their Creator to whom they owe their being; but this will not entitle you to call GOD father, in a ſpiritual ſenſe; no, you muſt be born again of GOD; however you may flatter yourſelves, you muſt have an inward principle wrought in your hearts by faith. This you muſt experience, this, this you muſt feel before you are chriſtians indeed.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST takes notice of each of you: you may think the LORD does not take notice of us, becauſe we are in a field, and out of church walls; but he does obſerve with what view you came this evening to hear his word; he knows whether it was to ſatisfy your curioſity, or to find out wherewith you might ridicule the preacher. The thoughts and intentions of all your hearts are not hidden from JESUS CHRIST; though he may ſeem to be aſleep, becauſe you are, at preſent, inſenſible of his workings upon your heart, and he may not ſeem to take notice of you, and regard you, no more than he did the *Syrophœnician* woman; yet he will turn to

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you and behold you with love; the LORD will be mindful of you in due time, and ſpeak peace to your troubled ſoul, though the ſea of troubles is beating over you, though the Phariſees of this day are ſcoffing at you, yet, when CHRIST rebukes, then they ſhall ceaſe.

Do not depend on yourſelf: ſay unto him, "Save us, LORD, or we periſh:" beſeech him to be your guide, and your ſalvation: I beſeech you, by the tender mercies of GOD, which are in CHRIST JESUS, that you preſent yourſelves to him, as your reaſonable ſervice.

Awake, you that ſleep, and ariſe from the dead, from the death of ſin, and CHRIST then will give you the light of his righteouſneſs. Come to CHRIST and you ſhall be welcome; O come unto this bleſſed JESUS, come notwithſtanding your vileneſs; for if you come not you will periſh: If CHRIST does not ſave you, your own good meaning, your own good intentions cannot; no, as you are in your blood, ſo you muſt periſh in your blood; but if you come to CHRIST you will find mercy, you ſhall not periſh. You cannot find ſalvation in any other but in CHRIST; if the diſciples could have ſaved themſelves, they would not have awoken JESUS CHRIST; but they were ſenſible that no one could ſave them but him; and therefore they cried out unto him; and ſo you, who are under the ſenſe of ſin, who are in fear of hell, if you ſeek unto your own works, you only ſeek your own death; for there is no fitneſs in you. I ſpeak the truth in CHRIST JESUS, I lie not, there is no fitneſs in you, but a fitneſs for eternal damnation; for what are you by nature, but children of wrath, and your hearts are Satan's garriſon. Becauſe you have gone to church, ſaid the prayers, gone to the ſacrament, and done no one any harm, you ſpeak peace to your ſouls; and all is in peace you think, and your caſe is good enough; but indeed, all is a falſe peace, and if you have no other peace than this, you muſt ſhortly lie down in everlaſting flames; this is an ungrounded, ſelf-created peace, and if you truſt to this peace you will periſh.

But do as the diſciples did when they were in diſtreſs; they go to CHRIST and ſay to him, "LORD, ſave us, we periſh." I offer you ſalvation this day; the door of mercy is not yet ſhut, there does yet remain a ſacrifice for ſin, for all

that will accept of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; he only knows the inmoſt thoughts of thy heart, he will embrace you in the arms of his love; he ſees the firſt ſprings of grace in you, and would willingly encourage it: the angels long for your being in the love and favour of GOD; they will rejoice to ſee you turn from ſin unto him. All the miniſters of the bleſſed JESUS would be glad to be inſtruments to turn you from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto GOD.

And he ſaith to them, why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?

And ſo, my brethren, I may ſay to you; why are you fearful to leave your ſins and turn to GOD? O turn to him, turn in a ſenſe of your own unworthineſs; tell him how polluted you are, how vile, and be not faithleſs, but believe; do not go in your own ſtrength, and then you need not fear. Why fear ye that the LORD JESUS CHRIST will not accept of you? your ſins will be no hindrance, your unworthineſs will be no hindrance; if your own corrupt hearts do not keep you back, or if your own good works do not hinder you from coming, nothing will hinder CHRIST from receiving of you; he loves to ſee poor ſinners coming to him, he is pleaſed to ſee them lie at his feet pleading his promiſes: and if you thus come to CHRIST, he will not ſend you away without his Spirit; no, but will receive and bleſs you.

O do not put a ſlight on infinite love: what would you have CHRIST do more? Is it not enough for him to come on purpoſe to ſave? Will you not ſerve GOD in your ſouls, as well as with your bodies? If not, you are only deceiving yourſelves, and mocking of GOD; he muſt have the heart. O ye of little faith, why are ye fearful leſt he ſhould not accept of you? If you will not believe me, ſure you will believe the LORD JESUS CHRIST; he has told thee that he will receive you: then why tarry ye, and do not go to him directly? Does he deſire impoſſibilities? It is only, "Give me thy heart:" or, does he want your heart only for the ſame end as the devil does, to make you miſerable? no, he only wants you to believe on him, that you might be ſaved. This, this, is all the dear Saviour deſires, to make you happy, that you may leave your ſins, to ſit down eternally with him, at the marriage ſupper of the Lamb.

Then he aroſe and rebuked the winds and the ſea, and there was a great calm.

Thus, you ſee, it was only in the power of CHRIST to ſtop the raging of the ſea; he rebuked it: the diſciples might have ſpoken for ever, and it would not have ceaſed: ſo it is with the word preached; I may preach to you while I live; I may ſpeak till I can ſpeak no more; but the doctrines of CHRIST will never do you good, unleſs he impreſs them upon your hearts: O then, in all thy troubles look up to CHRIST, that he may rebuke them; and if he ſpeaks the word, then they ſhall ceaſe. If the Phariſees of this generation ſcoff and jeer you, if they ſay all manner of evil againſt you, do not anſwer them; leave it unto CHRIST to rebuke them; for all you can ſay will be of no more ſignification, than the diſciples ſpeaking to the ſea; but when CHRIST ſpeaks the word, then they ſhall ceaſe; let it not diſcourage you, for if you will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, you muſt ſuffer perſecution.

It is true, that thoſe who are ſincerely good, are ſet up for marks for every one to ſhoot at. There is a continual enmity between the ſeed of the woman and the ſeed of the ſerpent; if you were of the world, the world would love its own; but becauſe CHRIST hath choſen you out of the world, therefore it hateth you.

Do not think of following CHRIST into glory, unleſs you go through the preſs here. Look forward, my brethren, into eternity, and behold CHRIST coming, and his reward with him, to give a kind recompence for all the temptations and difficulties of this preſent life.

But the men marvelled, ſaying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the ſeas obey him!

The men of the ſhip were amazed to ſee the miracle that JESUS CHRIST wrought only by his word; they thought he was ſomething more than a man. And have not we as much reaſon to admire, that when we are overwhelmed with troubles, from within and without, that JESUS CHRIST, only by the word of his power, ſhould ſpeak peace, and then there is peace indeed. When GOD firſt awakens us with a ſenſe of ſin, and ſets his terrors in array againſt us, then there are troubles and tempeſts; for Satan having got poſſeſſion,

before he will give place, he will fight and ſtrive hard to keep the ſoul from cloſing with JESUS: But when CHRIST comes, he ſtorms the heart, he breaks the peace, he giveth it moſt terrible alarms of judgment and hell, he ſets all in a combuſtion of fear and ſorrow, 'till he hath forced it to yield to his mere mercy, and take him for its governor; then Satan is caſt out; then the ſtorm is rebuked, and he eſtabliſhes a firm and laſting peace.

Can the ſea be ſtill while the wind is raging? no, it is impoſſible: ſo it is that there can be no peace in the ſoul, while it is at enmity with CHRIST; indeed, it may flatter itſelf and ſpeak peace, but there can be no true peace: tho' thou, O Phariſee, may harden and fortify thy heart againſt fear, grief, and trouble, yet, as ſure as GOD is true, they will batter down thy proud and fortified ſpirit, and ſeize upon it, and drive thee to amazement. This will be done here, or hereafter; here in mercy, or hereafter in wrath and judgment.

O my brethren, conſider what CHRIST hath done, and you will be aſtoniſhed that he has done ſo much for ſuch wicked wretches as you and I are. If you are eaſy under the ſtorm and tempeſt of ſin, and do not cry to CHRIST for ſalvation, thou art in a dangerous condition: and it is a wonder to conſider, how a man that is not ſure of having made his peace with GOD, can eat, or drink, or live in peace; that thou art not afraid, when thou lieſt down, that thou ſhould'ſt awake in hell: but if CHRIST ſpeak peace unto thy ſoul, who can then ſpeak trouble? None; no, not men or devils: Therefore, lie down at the feet of CHRIST whom you have reſiſted, and ſay, LORD, what wouldſt thou have me to do? and he will rebuke the winds and ſeas of thy troubled mind, and all things will be calm.

And when he was come to the other ſide into the country of the Gergeſenes, *there met him two poſſeſſed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, ſo that no man might paſs by that way.*

The LORD JESUS CHRIST, who went about doing good continually, very well knew, that he ſhould meet two poor men in this country of the *Gergeſenes*, who were poſſeſſed with devils;

devils; and JESUS CHRIST went on purpoſe that way, that he might relieve them. The devil, where he has the power, never wants will: but as I ſaid before, ſo I ſay again, though the devil is an enemy, yet he is a chained one; he could not deſtroy theſe two poor men, he could not hurt the people that paſſed that way, he could only terrify them: and thus it is with you; the devil tries his utmoſt ſkill and power to frighten you from coming to the LORD JESUS CHRIST; he uſes the utmoſt of his endeavours to keep poor ſick and weary ſinners from coming to JESUS; if he can but make you loſe your ſouls, it is the end he aims at.

And how many ſouls does he keep from CHRIST, for fear of reproach? Many thouſands would willingly ſee CHRIST in his glory, in the world to come, and would be happy with him there, but they are afraid of being now laughed at, and of hearing the phariſees ſay, here is another of his followers: they are afraid of loſing their worldly buſineſs, or of being counted methodiſtically mad and fit for bedlam. I doubt not but many are kept from JESUS CHRIST, for fear of a little hurt or inconveniency.

What will ſuch ſay, when the LORD JESUS CHRIST ſhall appear in his glory? Would you be glad to be confeſſed by him then, you muſt now not be aſhamed of confeſſing him before men: let not the fierceneſs of the devil keep you back from CHRIST, for fear of being counted fools; for the time will come, when it will be found who are truly wiſe, and who are truly mad.

Are you afraid to ſtand up for the cauſe of CHRIST in the world? Dare not you be ſingularly good? Are you afraid of being members of JESUS CHRIST? I tell you, ſuch perſons would crucify him afreſh were he in the world. But do not you, my brethren, ſo learn CHRIST; let not the temptations of the devil keep you from coming to the LORD JESUS CHRIST; he may be fierce, he may hurry you from place to place, but ſtrive with him, ſo that he may not drive you from CHRIST; and if you ſeek unto CHRIST, he will ſo help you that you ſhall reſiſt the devil, and then he will fly from you; CHRIST will diſpoſſeſs him, be not afraid therefore to meet JESUS CHRIST; tell him all that your ſouls want,

and

and he will give it to you; and you ſhall not be any longer troubled with the fierce outrages of the devil.

And they cried out, ſaying, what have we to do with thee, JESUS, *thou Son of* GOD? *Art thou come to torment us before the time?*

As ſoon as the devils obſerved JESUS coming near, then they were afraid, leſt he was come to puniſh them before that day of accounts, when all muſt be brought to judgment.

The devils themſelves are enough to convince all our polite Arians and Socinians. They here own the LORD JESUS CHRIST to be GOD bleſſed for ever; they feel his power, and are aſſured of his being the GOD who muſt condemn them at the great day of accounts; and they were afraid leſt the LORD JESUS CHRIST was come to puniſh them now. But though the devils believe the divinity of CHRIST, yet the world ſwarms with Arians and Socinians.

The Arians make CHRIST no more than a titular GOD, a ſubordinate deity, one who was more than man, and yet leſs than GOD; that he was a prophet ſent from GOD they own, but deny him to be equal with the Father. But I hope, my brethren, he is to you, what our creed makes him, GOD of GOD, very GOD of very GOD, co-eternal and conſubſtantial with the Father; that as there was not a moment of time in which GOD the Father was not, ſo there is not a moment of time in which GOD the Son was not. For he ſays himſelf, "All things were made by him;" and if they were made by him, he muſt be GOD; and whoever reads but the word of GOD, will find divine homage is paid to him, "and that he thought it no robbery to be equal with GOD;" he is "the Alpha and Omega." Theſe and a great many more places might be brought to prove the divinity of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; he could never have made ſatisfaction for our ſins if he had not been GOD as well as Man. As Man he ſuffered; as GOD he ſatisfied; ſo was GOD and man in one perſon; he took our nature upon him, and was offered upon the croſs for the ſins of all thoſe who come unto him, which if he had not been GOD he could never have ſatisfied for. It may be proved, even to a demonſtration, that the LORD JESUS CHRIST is GOD, and that he is equal with the Father.

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The Socinians do not go ſo far as the others; they look on CHRIST to be no more than a good man, who told the people their duty, and died in defence of the doctrines which he delivered unto them.

But I hope there are none ſuch here, that have ſo low and diſhonourable thoughts of the bleſſed JESUS, and that thus deſpiſe the divinity of the LORD who bought them. No, I hope better things of you, and things that accompany ſalvation. Think you, that any one who denies the deity of CHRIST can ever be ſaved by him, living and dying in that ſtate? Surely, the time will come, when they who have denied his Deity, ſhall feel the power of it hereafter; they ſhall feel that he is GOD as well as man; then he will be owned as GOD by all thoſe who now dare to deny his truths; but GOD forbid it ſhould go undetermined till then! Woe unto the polite infidels of this generation, for the devils will riſe up in judgment againſt them.

If any ſuch are here, conſider what you are doing of, before it is too late; return, return ye unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon you, and to JESUS CHRIST, and he will abundantly pardon. O my friends, let me beſeech you to conſider what you are about, leſt you fall into hell, and there be none to deliver you.

And the devils beſought him, ſaying, If thou caſt us out, ſuffer us to go away into the herd of ſwine. And he ſaid unto them, Go: And when they were come out, they went into the herd of ſwine; and behold, the whole herd of ſwine ran violently down a ſteep place into the ſea, and periſhed in the waters.

Here we may ſee, that no ſooner had the devil power, but he puts it into execution; thus, if the devil has but power to tempt, or to hurry a ſoul, O how grievous a tyrant he is, hurrying from one temptation to another, from one ſin unto another, and would, if it were poſſible, hurry you all into hell with as much violence, as he did the poor ſwine into the ſea; but CHRIST by his grace prevents it. JESUS CHRIST died for ſouls, and therefore the devil cannot do with them as he will; he may have the will, but he cannot get the power. It is plain, that when the devil himſelf, or perſecuting men, get the power, they will harraſs the poor chriſtians; every thing

thing is too good for them, and they are not worthy to be ſet with the dogs of the flock. My brethren, how joyful would many be, if the laws of our land would permit them to deſtroy us; how would the Phariſees hurry us to priſon and to death; but, bleſſed be GOD, he does not ſay to them, as to the devil, "Go:" No, he bids them ſtay, he hedges their way up with thorns that they cannot ſtir to hurt us; they would fain, but they dare not deſtroy us; nothing withholds them but the power of the bleſſed JESUS. And therefore, be not afraid of their wrath though it is cruel, and of their anger though it be fierce: let them ſhoot their arrows, even bitter words, againſt us, bleſſed be GOD, the ſhield of faith will be a preſervative againſt them all.

And when you are thus preſerved, it will be the occaſion of joy in the Holy Ghoſt; though many look on the joy of the Holy Ghoſt as enthuſiaſm and madneſs, and ſay that there is no ſuch thing; but well do I know there is, it carries its own evidence along with it. Plead therefore with GOD, in the name of JESUS CHRIST; continue to wreſtle with him, until he beſtows the bleſſing upon you, and gives you a feeling of that joy which the world intermeddles not with, and which they are ſtrangers to: indeed the devil may ſtir up his agents to hurry us from one trouble to another; but it will not ſignify, for the LORD JESUS CHRIST will not ſuffer him to hurry us into hell; no, but will give us his Spirit, which will be a preſervative againſt all the aſſaults of the devil. Now ſee what followed this miracle, which JESUS had wrought, by permitting the devil to enter into the herd of ſwine.

And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing; and what was befallen to the poſſeſſed of the devils.

The people were ſo amazed to ſee the power that CHRIST had, and the malice with which the devil was poſſeſſed, that they were afraid, and told all that had befallen the poſſeſſed of the devils: and ſo, when the ſpirit of GOD has been at work on your ſouls, and you are brought to feel the power of GOD upon your hearts, you will be ſo overjoyed that you will tell to every one what great things GOD has done for

ur ſouls; you will be ſo full of joy, that you will de-
are the whole working of GOD on your hearts, and you
ill declare how you have been enabled to overcome Satan,
d how you were affected at ſuch a ſermon, in ſuch a place,
d at ſuch a time.

You will then love to talk of JESUS; no converſation will
ſo pleaſing as that of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; no,
will be altogether lovely unto you, when you have once
ſted of his love, and felt the power of his grace upon your
earts.

And behold, the whole city came out to meet JESUS, *and when*
ey ſaw him, they beſought him that he would depart out of their
aſts.

The whole city came to meet JESUS, not to worſhip, nor
thank him for the releaſing of the two poor men who were
offeſſed; no, but to beſeech him to go from them; they
alued their ſwine more than the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and
ad rather part from him, than them: and have we not
mong us, thouſands who call themſelves chriſtians, who had
ther part with CHRIST than their pleaſures? A play, a ball,
r an aſſembly is far more agreeable to them than the com-
any and preſence of the LORD JESUS CHRIST: if they can
ut indulge their ſenſual appetite, pleaſe and pamper their
ellies, ſatisfy the luſt of the eye, the luſt of the fleſh, and
e pride of life, they regard no more, but reſt contented, as
they were to live here always. O my dear brethren, I
ope none of you can reſt contented with ſuch proceed-
gs as theſe, but that you like the company of the LORD
ESUS too well to part with him for a few delights of this
fe: and are there not many, who part with CHRIST for
eir own good works, and think they can go to heaven, if
ey do but go to church and ſay their prayers and take the
acrament? but alas! they will be much deceived, for if they
eſt in any thing ſhort of the LORD JESUS, if they do not
ake him the chief corner-ſtone, they will fall infinitely ſhort
f what they flattered themſelves to attain unto.

I would ſpeak a few words to you before I part from you
his evening, by way of application. Let me beſeech you
o come to JESUS CHRIST; I invite you all to come to him
and

and receive him as your LORD and Saviour; he is ready to receive you: if you are afraid to go becauſe you are in a loſt condition, he came to ſave ſuch; and to ſuch as were weary and heavy laden, ſuch as feel the weight and burden of their ſins, he has promiſed he will give reſt: ſuch as feel the weight and burden of their ſins on their ſouls, a burden too heavy for them to bear, are weary of it, and know not how to obtain deliverance of it, in the name of my LORD and maſter, I invite you to come to him, that you may find reſt for your ſouls.

If you will but come unto him he will not reproach you, as juſtly he might; he will not reflect upon you for not coming ſooner unto him; no, my dear brethren, he will rejoice and be glad, and will ſay unto you, "Son, daughter, be of good cheer, your ſins are forgiven you:" theſe words he ſaid to others; and if you will but come unto him, by faith in his blood, he is ready to ſay the ſame unto you now, as he did to them formerly, for "he is the ſame to-day, yeſterday and for ever:" though he ſuffered on the croſs ſeventeen hundred years ago, yet he is the ſame in goodneſs and power as ever he was.

He calls you, by his miniſters; O come unto him, beg of him to break your ſtubborn hearts, that you may be willing to be brought to him in his own way, to be made poor in ſpirit, and entitled to an inheritance among them that are ſanctified.

O come and drink of the water of life; you may buy without money and without price; he is labouring to bring you back from ſin, and from Satan unto himſelf: open the door of your hearts, and the King of glory ſhall enter in.

But if you are ſtrangers to this doctrine, and account it fooliſhneſs; or, if you think you have enough of your own to recommend you to the favour of GOD, however you may go to church, or receive the ſacrament, you have no true love to the LORD JESUS CHRIST; you are ſtrangers to the truth of grace in your hearts, and are unacquainted with the new-birth; you do not know what it is to have your natures changed; and 'till you do experience theſe things, you never can enter into the kingdom of GOD.

What

t ſhall I ſay, my brethren, unto you? My heart is
is quite full, and I muſt ſpeak, or I ſhall burſt.
do you think your ſouls of no value? do you eſteem
s not worth ſaving? Are your pleaſures worth more
ur ſouls? Had you rather regard the diverſions of
e, than the ſalvation of your ſouls? If ſo, you will
e partakers with him in glory; but if you come unto
e will give you a new nature, ſupply you with his
ere, and bring you to glory hereafter; and there you
g praiſes and hallelujahs to the Lamb for ever.
may this be the happy end of all who hear me! may
RD guide you by his counſel, until he comes to fetch
heaven, and make you partakers of his glory!
he direct you in his ways, and lead you in thoſe paths
lead to everlaſting life! May you be holy here, and
hereafter: may your lives anſwer the profeſſion you
that we may all be found at the right hand of the
JESUS CHRIST, when he ſhall come to judge the world
ng to our works, whether they be good or evil! and
: then may be preſented faultleſs before the preſence
glory with exceeding joy, GOD of his infinite mercy
&c.

SERMON

SERMON XXIII.

Marks of a true Converſion.

MATTHEW xviii. 3.

Verily, I ſay unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

I Suppoſe I may take it for granted, that all of you, among whom I am now about to preach the kingdom of GOD, are fully convinced, that it is appointed for all men once to die, and that ye all really believe that after death comes the judgment, and that the conſequence of that judgment will be, that ye muſt be doomed to dwell in the blackneſs of darkneſs, or aſcend to dwell with the bleſſed GOD, for ever and ever. I may take it for granted alſo, that whatever your practice in common life may be, there is not one, though ever ſo profligate and abandoned, but hopes to go to that place, which the ſcriptures call Heaven, when he dies. And, I think, if I know any thing of mine own heart, my heart's deſire, as well as my prayer to GOD, for you all, is, that I may ſee you ſitting down in the kingdom of our heavenly Father. But then, though we all hope to go to heaven when we die, yet, if we may judge by people's lives, and our LORD ſays, "that by their fruits we may know them," I am afraid it will be found, that thouſands, and ten thouſands, who hope to go to this bleſſed place after death, are not now in the way to it while they live. Though we call ourſelves chriſtians, and would conſider it as an affront put upon us, for any one to doubt whether we were chriſtians or not; yet there are a great many, who bear the name of CHRIST, that yet do not ſo much as know what real chriſtianity is. Hence it is, that if you aſk a great many, upon what

what their hopes of heaven are founded, they will tell you, that they belong to this, or that, or the other denomination, and part of chriſtians, into which *Chriſtendom* is now unhappily divided. If you aſk others, upon what foundation they have built their hope of heaven, they will tell you, that they have been baptized, that their fathers and mothers preſented them to the LORD JESUS CHRIST in their infancy; and though, inſtead of fighting under CHRIST's banner, they have been fighting againſt him, almoſt ever ſince they were baptiſed, yet becauſe they have been admitted to church, and their names are in the Regiſter-book of the pariſh, therefore they will make us believe, that their names are alſo written in the book of life. But a great many, who will not build their hopes of ſalvation upon ſuch a ſorry rotten foundation as this, yet if they are, what we generally call, negatively good people; if they live ſo as their neighbours cannot ſay that they do any body harm; they do not doubt but they ſhall be happy when they die; nay, I have found many ſuch die, as the ſcripture ſpeaks, "without any bands in their death." And if a perſon is what the world calls an honeſt moral man, if he does juſtly, and, what the world calls, loves a little mercy, is now and then good-natured, reacheth out his hand to the poor, receives the ſacrament once or twice a year, and is outwardly ſober and honeſt; the world looks upon ſuch an one as a chriſtian indeed, and doubtleſs we are to judge charitably of every ſuch perſon. There are many likewiſe, who go on in a round of duties, a model of performances, that think they ſhall go to heaven; but if you examine them, though they have a CHRIST in their heads, they have no CHRIST in their hearts.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST knew this full well; he knew how deſperately wicked and deceitful mens hearts were; he knew very well how many would go to hell even by the very gates of heaven, how many would climb up even to the door, and go ſo near as to knock at it, and yet after all be diſmiſſed with a "verily I know you not." The LORD, therefore, plainly tells us, what great change muſt be wrought in us, and what muſt be done for us, before we can have any well grounded hopes of entering into the kingdom of heaven. Hence, he tells *Nicodemus*, "that unleſs a man be born again, and from above, and unleſs a man be born of water and of the Spirit,

be cannot enter into the kingdom of GOD." And of all the ſolemn declarations of our LORD, I mean with reſpect to this, perhaps the words of the text are one of the moſt ſolemn, "except, (ſays CHRIST) ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The words, if you look back to the context, are plainly directed to the diſciples; for we are told, "that at the ſame time came the diſciples unto JESUS." And I think it is plain from many parts of Scripture, that theſe diſciples, to whom our LORD addreſſed himſelf at this time, were in ſome degree converted before. If we take the words ſtrictly, they are applicable only to thoſe, that have already gotten ſome, though but weak, faith in CHRIST. Our LORD means, that though they had already taſted the grace of GOD, yet there was ſo much of the old man, ſo much indwelling ſin, and corruption, yet remaining in their hearts, that unleſs they were more converted than they were, unleſs a greater change paſt upon their ſouls, and ſanctification was ſtill carried on, they could give but very little evidence of their belonging to his kingdom, which was not to be ſet up in outward grandeur, as they ſuppoſed, but was to be a ſpiritual kingdom, begun here, but compleated in the kingdom of GOD hereafter. But though the words had a peculiar reference to our LORD's diſciples; yet as our LORD makes ſuch a declaration as this in other places of Scripture, eſpecially in that diſcourſe to *Nicodemus*, I believe the words may be juſtly applied to ſaints and ſinners; and as I ſuppoſe there are two ſorts of people here, ſome who know CHRIST, and ſome of you that do not know him; ſome that are converted, and ſome that are ſtrangers to converſion, I ſhall endeavour ſo to ſpeak, that if GOD ſhall be pleaſed to aſſiſt me, and to give you an hearing ear and an obedient heart, both ſaints and ſinners may have their portion.

Firſt, I ſhall endeavour to ſhow you in what reſpects we are to underſtand this aſſertion of our LORD's, "that we muſt be converted and become like little children." I ſhall then,

Secondly, Speak to thoſe who profeſs a little of this child-like temper.

And *Laſtly*, ſhall ſpeak to you, who have no reaſon to think that this change has ever paſt upon your ſouls. And

Firſt,

First, I ſhall endeavour to ſhow you, what we are to underſtand by our LORD's ſaying, "Except ye be converted and become as little children." But I think, before I ſpeak to this point, it may be proper to premiſe one or two particulars.

1. I think, that the words plainly imply, that before you or I can have any well-grounded, ſcriptural hope, of being happy in a future ſtate, there muſt be ſome great, ſome notable, and amazing change paſs upon our ſouls. I believe, there is not one adult perſon in the congregation, but will readily confeſs, that a great change hath paſt upon their bodies, ſince they came firſt into the world, and were infants dandled upon their mothers knees. It is true, ye have no more members than ye had then; but how are theſe altered! Tho' you are in one reſpect the ſame ye were, for the number of your limbs, and as to the ſhape of your body, yet if a perſon that knew you when ye were in your cradle, had been abſent from you for ſome years, and ſaw you when grown up, ten thouſand to one if he would know you at all, ye are ſo altered, ſo different from what ye were, when ye were little ones. And as the words plainly imply, that there has a great change paſt upon our bodies ſince we were children, ſo before we can go to heaven, there muſt as great a change paſs upon our ſouls; Our ſouls conſidered in a phyſical ſenſe are ſtill the ſame, there is to be no philoſophical change wrought on them: But then, as for our temper, habit and conduct, we muſt be ſo changed and altered, that thoſe who knew us the other day, when in a ſtate of ſin, and before we knew CHRIST, and are acquainted with us now, muſt ſee ſuch an alteration, that they may ſtand as much amazed at it, as a perſon at the alteration wrought on any perſon he has not ſeen for twenty years from his infancy.

2. But I think it proper to premiſe ſomething farther, becauſe this text is the grand ſtrong-hold of *Arminians*, and others. They learn of the devil to bring texts to propagate bad principles: when the devil had a mind to tempt JESUS CHRIST, becauſe CHRIST quoted ſcripture, therefore Satan did ſo too. And ſuch perſons, that their doctrine and bad principles may go down the better, would fain perſuade unwary and unſtable ſouls, that they are founded upon the word of GOD. Though the doctrine of original ſin, is a doctrine

written in ſuch legible characters in the word of GOD, that he who runs may read it; and though, I think, every thing without us, and every thing within us, plainly proclaims that we are fallen creatures; though the very heathens, who had no other light, but the dim light of unaſſiſted reaſon, complained of this, for they felt the wound, and diſcovered the diſeaſe, but were ignorant of the cauſe of it; yet there are too many perſons of thoſe who have been baptized in the name of CHRIST, that dare to ſpeak againſt the doctrine of original ſin, and are angry with thoſe ill-natured miniſters, who paint man in ſuch black colours. Say they, "It cannot be that "children come into the world with the guilt of *Adam*'s ſin "lying upon them." Why? Deſire them to prove it from Scripture, and they will urge this very text, our LORD tells us, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Now their argument runs thus, "It is implied in the words of the text, "that little children are innocent, and that they come into the "world like a mere blank piece of white paper, otherwiſe our "LORD muſt argue abſurdly, for he could never pretend to "ſay, that we muſt be converted, and be made like wicked "creatures; that would be no converſion." But, my dear friends, this is to make JESUS CHRIST ſpeak what he never intended, and what cannot be deduced from his words. That little children are guilty, I mean, that they are conceived and born in ſin, is plain from the whole tenor of the book of GOD. *David* was a man after GOD's own heart, yet, ſays he, "I was conceived in ſin." *Jeremiah* ſpeaking of every one's heart, ſays, "the heart of man is deceitful and deſperately wicked above all things." GOD's ſervants unanimouſly declare, (and *Paul* cites it from one of them) "that we are altogether now become abominable, altogether gone out of the way of original righteouſneſs, there is not one of us that doth good (by nature), no not one." And I appeal to any of you that are mothers and fathers, if ye do not diſcern original ſin or corruption in your children, as ſoon as they come into the world; and as they grow up, if ye do not diſcover ſelf-will, and an averſion to goodneſs. What is the reaſon your children are ſo averſe to inſtruction, but becauſe they bring enmity into the world with them, againſt a good and gracious GOD?

ɒ ? So then, it is plain from ſcripture and fact, that chil-
n are born in ſin, and conſequently that they are children
wrath. And for my part, I think, that the death of every
d is a plain proof of original ſin; ſickneſs and death came
the world by ſin, and it ſeems not conſiſtent with GOD's
dneſs and juſtice, to let a little child be ſick or die, unleſs
m's firſt ſin was imputed to him. If any charge GOD with
ſtice for imputing *Adam*'s ſin to a little child, behold we
e gotten a ſecond *Adam*, to bring our children to him.
refore, when our LORD ſays, "unleſs ye are converted,
become as little children," we are not to underſtand, as
gh our LORD would inſinuate, that little children are
ectly innocent; but in a comparative, and as I ſhall ſhew
by and by, in a rational ſenſe. Little children are inno-
, compare them with grown people; but take them as
are, and as they come into the world, they have hearts
are ſenſual, and minds which are carnal. And I mention
with the greateſt concern, becauſe I verily believe, unleſs
nts are convinced of this, they will never take proper care
ieir children's education. If parents were convinced, that
dren's hearts were ſo bad as they are, you would never
ond of letting them go to balls, aſſemblies, and plays, the
ral tendency of which is to debauch their minds, and
e them the children of the devil. If parents were con-
ed of this, I believe they would pray more, when they
g their children to be baptized, and would not make it a
e matter of form. And I believe, if they really were con-
ed, that their children were conceived in ſin, they would
ys put up that petition, before their children came into
world, which I have heard that a good woman always
ut up, "LORD JESUS, let me never bear a child for hell
the devil." O! is it not to be feared, that thouſands
hildren will appear, at the great day, before GOD, and
reſence of angels and men will ſay, Father and mother,
to the wickedneſs of mine own heart, I owe my damna-
to your bad education of me.

aving premiſed theſe two particulars, I now proceed to
in what ſenſe we are really to underſtand the words, that
uſt be converted and become like little children. The
ngeliſt tells us, "that the diſciples at this time came

unto JESUS, ſaying, Who is the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven?" Theſe diſciples had imbibed the common prevailing notion, that the LORD JESUS CHRIST was to be a temporal prince; they dreamed of nothing but being miniſters of ſtate, of ſitting on CHRIST's right-hand in his kingdom, and lording it over GOD's people; they thought themſelves qualified for ſtate offices, as generally ignorant people are apt to conceive of themſelves. Well, ſay they, "Who is the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven?" Which of us ſhall have the chief management of public affairs? A pretty queſtion for a few poor fiſhermen, who ſcarcely knew how to drag their nets to ſhore, much leſs how to govern a kingdom. Our LORD, therefore, in the 2d verſe, to mortify them, calls a little child, and ſets him in the midſt of them. This action was as much as if our LORD had ſaid, "Poor creatures! your imaginations are very towering; you diſpute who ſhall be greateſt in the kingdom of heaven; I will make this little child preach to you, or I will preach to you by him: Verily I ſay unto you, (I who am truth itſelf, I who know in what manner my ſubjects are to enter into my kingdom; I ſay unto you, ye are ſo far from being in a right temper for my kingdom, that) except ye be converted, and become as this little child, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, (unleſs ye are, comparatively ſpeaking, as looſe to the world, as looſe to crowns, ſcepters, and kingdoms, and earthly things, as this poor little child I have in my hand) ye ſhall not enter into my kingdom." So that what our LORD is ſpeaking of, is not the innocency of little children, if you conſider the relation they ſtand in to GOD, and as they are in themſelves, when brought into the world; but what our LORD means is, that as to ambition and luſt after the world, we muſt in this ſenſe become as little children. Is there never a little boy or girl in this congregation? Aſk a poor little child, that can juſt ſpeak, about a crown, ſcepter, or kingdom, the poor creature has no notion about it: give a little boy or girl a ſmall thing to play with, it will leave the world to other people. Now in this ſenſe we muſt be converted, and become as little children; that is, we muſt be as looſe to the world, comparatively ſpeaking, as a little child.

Do not miſtake me, I am not going to perſuade you to ſhut up your ſhops, or leave your buſineſs; I am not going to perſuade you, that if ye will be chriſtians, ye muſt turn hermits, and retire out of the world: ye cannot leave your wicked hearts behind you, when you leave the world; for I find when I am alone, my wicked heart has followed me, go where I will. No, the religion of JESUS is a ſocial religion. But though JESUS CHRIST does not call us to go out of the world, ſhut up our ſhops, and leave our children to be provided for by miracles; yet this muſt be ſaid to the honour of chriſtianity, if we are really converted, we ſhall be looſe from the world. Though we are engaged in it, and are obliged to work for our children; though we are obliged to follow trades and merchandize, and to be ſerviceable to the commonwealth; yet if we are real chriſtians, we ſhall be looſe to the world; though I will not pretend to ſay that all real chriſtians have attained to the ſame degree of ſpiritual-mindedneſs. This is the primary meaning of theſe words, that we muſt be converted and become as little children; nevertheleſs, I ſuppoſe the words are to be underſtood in other ſenſes.

When our LORD ſays, we muſt be converted and become as little children, I ſuppoſe he means alſo, that we muſt be ſenſible of our weakneſs, comparatively ſpeaking, as a little child. Every one looks upon a little child, as a poor weak creature; as one that ought to go to ſchool and learn ſome new leſſon every day; and as ſimple and artleſs: one without guile, having not learned the abominable art, called diſſimulation. Now in all theſe ſenſes, I believe we are to underſtand the words of the text.——Are little children ſenſible of their weakneſs? Muſt they be led by the hand? Muſt we take hold of them or they will fall? So, if we are converted, if the grace of GOD be really in our hearts, my dear friends, however we may have thought of ourſelves once, whatever were our former high exalted imaginations; yet we ſhall now be ſenſible of our weakneſs; we ſhall no more ſay, "We are rich and increaſed with goods, and lack nothing;" we ſhall be inwardly poor: we ſhall feel "that we are poor, miſerable, blind, and naked." And as a little child gives up its hand to be guided by a parent or a nurſe, ſo thoſe who are truly converted, and are real chriſtians, will give up the heart, their

underſtandings, their wills, their affections, to be guided by the word, providence, and the Spirit of the LORD. Hence it is, that the Apoſtle, ſpeaking of the ſons of GOD, ſays, "As many as are led by the Spirit of GOD, they are (and to be ſure he means they only are) the ſons of GOD."

And as little children look upon themſelves to be ignorant creatures, ſo thoſe that are converted, do look upon themſelves as ignorant too. Hence it is, that *John*, ſpeaking to chriſtians, calls them little children; "I have written unto you, little children." And CHRIST's flock is called a little flock, not only becauſe little in number, but alſo becauſe thoſe who are members of his flock, are indeed little in their own eyes. Hence that great man, that great apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, that ſpiritual father of ſo many thouſands of ſouls, that man, who in the opinion of Dr. *Goodwin*, "ſits neareſt the God-man, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in glory," that choſen veſſel, the Apoſtle *Paul*, when he ſpeaks of himſelf, ſays, "Unto me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the *Gentiles* the unſearchable riches of CHRIST." Perhaps ſome of you, when you read theſe words, will be apt to think that *Paul* did not ſpeak true, that he did not really feel what he ſaid; becauſe you judge *Paul*'s heart by your own proud hearts: but the more ye get of the grace of GOD, and the more ye are partakers of the divine life, the more will ye ſee your own meanneſs and vileneſs, and be leſs in your own eyes. Hence it is, that Mr. *Flavel*, in his book called, *Huſbandry Spiritualized*, compares young chriſtians to green corn; which before it is ripe, ſhoots up very high, but there is little ſolidity in it: whereas, an old chriſtian is like ripe corn; it doth not lift up its head ſo much, but then it is more weighty, and fit to be cut down, and put into the farmer's barn. Young chriſtians are alſo like little rivulets; ye know rivulets are ſhallow, yet make great noiſe; but an old chriſtian, he makes not much noiſe, he goes on ſweetly, like a deep river ſliding into the ocean.

And as a little child is looked upon as an harmleſs creature, and generally ſpeaks true; ſo, if we are converted, and become as little children, we ſhall be guileleſs as well as harmleſs. What ſaid the dear Redeemer when he ſaw *Nathaniel*? As though it was a rare ſight he gazed upon, and would

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have others gave upon it; "Behold an *Iſraelite* indeed:" Why ſo? "In whom is no guile." Do not miſtake me; I am not ſaying, that chriſtians ought not to be prudent; they ought exceedingly to pray to GOD for prudence, otherwiſe they may follow the deluſions of the devil, and by their imprudence give wrong touches to the ark of GOD. It was the lamentation of a great man, "GOD has given me many "gifts, but GOD has not given me prudence." Therefore, when I ſay, a chriſtian muſt be guileleſs, I do not mean, he ſhould expoſe himſelf, and lie open to every one's aſſault: we ſhould pray for the wiſdom of the ſerpent, though we ſhall generally learn this wiſdom by our blunders and imprudence: and we muſt make ſome advance in chriſtianity, before we know our imprudence. A perſon really converted, can ſay, as it is reported of a philoſopher, "I wiſh there was a win-"dow in my breaſt, that every one may ſee the uprightneſs "of my heart and intentions:" And though there is too much of the old man in us, yet, if we are really converted, there will be in us no allowed guile, we ſhall be harmleſs. And that is the reaſon why the poor chriſtian is too often impoſed upon; he judgeth other people by himſelf; having an honeſt heart, he thinks every one as honeſt as himſelf, and therefore is a prey to every one. I might enlarge upon each of theſe points, it is a copious and important truth; but I do not intend to multiply many marks and heads.

And therefore, as I have ſomething to ſay by way of perſonal application, give me leave therefore, with the utmoſt tenderneſs, and at the ſame time with faithfulneſs, to call upon you, my dear friends. My text is introduced in an awful manner, "Verily I ſay unto you;" and what JESUS ſaid then, he ſays now to you, to me, and to as many as ſit under a preached goſpel, and to as many as the LORD our GOD ſhall call. Let me exhort you to ſee whether ye are converted; whether ſuch a great and almighty change has paſſed upon any of your ſouls. As I told you before, ſo I tell you again, ye all hope to go to heaven, and I pray GOD Almighty ye may be all there: when I ſee ſuch a congregation as this, if my heart is in a proper frame, I feel myſelf ready to lay down my life, to be inſtrumental only to ſave one ſoul. It makes my heart bleed within me, it makes me ſometimes

ſometimes moſt unwilling to preach, leſt that word that I hope will do good, may increaſe the damnation of any, and perhaps of a great part of the auditory, through their own unbelief. Give me leave to deal faithfully with your ſouls. I have your dead warrant in my hand: CHRIST has ſaid it, JESUS will ſtand to it, it is like the laws of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, it altereth not. Hark, O man! hark, O woman! he that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the LORD JESUS CHRIST ſays, "Verily I ſay unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Though this is *Saturday* night, and ye are now preparing for the ſabbath, for what you know, you may yet never live to ſee the ſabbath. You have had awful proofs of this lately; a woman died but yeſterday, a man died the day before, another was killed by ſomething that fell from a houſe, and it may be in twenty-four hours more, many of you may be carried into an unalterable ſtate. Now then, for GOD's ſake, for your own ſouls ſake, if ye have a mind to dwell with GOD, and cannot bear the thought of dwelling in everlaſting burning, before I go any further, ſilently put up one prayer, or ſay *Amen* to the prayer I would put in your mouths; "LORD, ſearch me and try me; LORD, examine my heart, and let my conſcience ſpeak; O let me know whether I am converted or not!" What ſay ye, my dear hearers? what ſay ye, my fellow-ſinners? what ſay ye, my guilty brethren? Has GOD by his bleſſed Spirit wrought ſuch a change in your hearts? I do not aſk you, whether GOD has made you angels? That I know will never be; I only aſk you, Whether ye have any well-grounded hope to think that GOD has made you new creatures in CHRIST JESUS? So renewed and changed your natures, that you can ſay, I humbly hope, that as to the habitual temper and tendency of my mind, that my heart is free from wickedneſs; I have a huſband, I have a wife, I have alſo children, I keep a ſhop, I mind my buſineſs; but I love theſe creatures for GOD's ſake, and do every thing for CHRIST: and if GOD was now to call me away, according to the habitual temper of my mind, I can ſay, LORD, I am ready; and however I love the creatures, I hope I can ſay, Whom have I in heaven but thee? Whom have I in heaven, O my GOD and my dear Redeemer,

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that I deſire in compariſon of thee? Can you thank God for the creatures, and ſay at the ſame time, theſe are not my CHRIST? I ſpeak in plain language, you know my way of preaching: I do not want to play the orator, I do not want to be counted a ſcholar; I want to ſpeak ſo as I may reach poor people's hearts. What ſay ye, my dear hearers? Are ye ſenſible of your weakneſs? Do ye feel that ye are poor, miſerable, blind, and naked by nature? Do ye give up your hearts, your affections, your wills, your underſtanding to be guided by the Spirit of GOD, as a little child gives up its hand to be guided by its parent? Are ye little in your own eyes? Do ye think meanly of yourſelves? And do you want to learn ſomething new every day? I mention theſe marks, becauſe I am apt to believe they are more adapted to a great many of your capacities. A great many of you have not that flowing of affection ye ſometimes had, therefore ye are for giving up all your evidences, and making way for the devil's coming into your heart. You are not brought up to the mount as ye uſed to be, therefore ye conclude ye have no grace at all. But if the LORD JESUS CHRIST has emptied thee, and humbled thee, if he is giving thee to ſee and know that thou art nothing; though thou art not growing upward, thou art growing downward; and though thou haſt not ſo much joy, yet thy heart is emptying to be more abundantly repleniſhed by and by. Can any of you follow me? Then, give GOD thanks, and take the comfort of it.

If thou art thus converted, and become a little child, I welcome thee, in the name of the LORD JESUS, into GOD's dear family; I welcome thee, in the name of the dear Redeemer, into the company of GOD's children. O ye dear ſouls, though the world ſees nothing in you, though there be no outward difference between you and others, yet I look upon you in another light, even as ſo many kings ſons and daughters: all hail! in the name of GOD, I wiſh every one of you joy from my ſoul, ye ſons and daughters of the King of kings. Will not you henceforth exerciſe a child-like temper? Will not ſuch a thought melt down your hearts, when I tell you, that the great GOD, who might have frowned you to hell for your ſecret ſins, that nobody knew of but GOD and your own ſouls, and who might have damned you times

without number, hath caſt the mantle of his love over you; his voice hath been, Let that man, that woman live, for I have found a ranſom. O will ye not cry out, Why me, LORD? Was King *George* to ſend for any of your children, and were you to hear they were to be his adopted ſons, how highly honoured would you think your children to be? What great condeſcenſion was it for *Pharaoh*'s daughter to take up *Moſes*, a poor child expoſed in an ark of bulruſhes, and breed him up for her child? But what is that happineſs in compariſon of thine, who was the other day a child of the devil, but now by converting grace art become a child of GOD! Are ye converted? Are ye become like little children? Then what muſt ye do? My dear hearers, be obedient to GOD, remember GOD is your father; and as every one of you muſt know what a dreadful croſs it is to have a wicked, diſobedient child; if ye do not want your children to be diſobedient to you, for CHRIST's ſake be not diſobedient to your heavenly parent. If GOD be your father, obey him; if GOD be your father, ſerve him; love him with all your heart, love him with all your might, with all your ſoul, and with all your ſtrength. If GOD be your father, fly from every thing that may diſpleaſe him; and walk worthy of that GOD, who has called you to his kingdom and glory. If ye are converted and become like little children, then behave as little children: they long for the breaſt, and with it will be contented. Are ye new-born babes? then deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. I do not want that Arminian huſks ſhould go down with you; ye are kings ſons and daughters, and have a more refined taſte; you muſt have the doctrines of grace; and bleſſed be GOD that you dwell in a country, where the ſincere word is ſo plainly preached. Are ye children? then grow in grace, and in the knowledge of your LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. Have any of you children that do not grow? do not ye lament theſe children, and cry over them; do not ye ſay, my child will never be fit for any thing in the world? Well, doth it grieve you to ſee a child that will not grow; how much muſt it grieve the heart of CHRIST to ſee you grow ſo little? Will ye be always children? Will ye be always learning the firſt principles of chriſtianity, and never preſs forward toward the mark, for the

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prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS? GOD forbid. Let the language of your heart be, "LORD JESUS "help me to grow, help me to learn more, learn me to live "ſo as my progreſs may be known to all!"

Are ye GOD's children? Are ye converted, and become like little children? Then deal with GOD as your little children do with you; as ſoon as ever they want any thing, or if any body hurt them, I appeal to yourſelves if they do not directly run to their parent. Well, are ye GOD's children? Doth the devil trouble you? Doth the world trouble you? Go tell your father of it, go directly and complain to GOD. Perhaps you may ſay, I cannot utter fine words: but do any of you expect fine words from your children? If they come crying, and can ſpeak but half words, do not your hearts yearn over them? And has not GOD unſpeakably more pity to you? If ye can only make ſigns to him; "As a father pitieth his children, ſo will the LORD pity them that fear him." I pray you therefore be bold with your Father, ſaying, "Abba, Father," Satan troubles me, the world troubles me, my own mother's children are angry with me; heavenly Father, plead my cauſe! the LORD will then ſpeak for you ſome way or other.

Are ye converted, and become as little children, have ye entered into GOD's family? Then aſſure yourſelves, that your heavenly father will chaſten you now and then; "for what ſon is there whom the father chaſtneth not: if ye are without chaſtiſement, of which all are partakers, then are ye baſtards and not ſons." It is recorded of biſhop *Latimer*, that in the houſe where he came to lodge, he overheard the maſter of the houſe ſay, I thank GOD I never had a croſs in my life: O ſaid he, then I will not ſtay here. I believe there is not a child of GOD, when in a good frame, but has prayed for great humility; they have prayed for great faith, they have prayed for great love, they have prayed for all the graces of the Spirit: Do ye know, when ye put up theſe prayers, that ye did alſo ſay, LORD ſend us great trials: for how is it poſſible to know ye have great faith, humility and love, unleſs GOD put you into great trials, that ye may know whether ye have them or not. I mention this, becauſe a great many of the children of GOD (I am ſure it has been a temptation

to me many times, when I have been under GOD's ſmarting rod) when they have great trials, think GOD is giving them over. If therefore ye are GOD's children; if ye are converted and become as little children; do not expect that GOD will be like a fooliſh parent; no, he is a jealous GOD, he loves his child too well to ſpare his rod. How did he correct *Miriam?* How did he correct *Moſes?* How hath GOD in all ages corrected his deareſt children? Therefore if ye are converted, and become as little children, if GOD hath taken away a child, or your ſubſtance, if GOD ſuffers friends to forſake you, and if you are forſaken as it were both by GOD and man, ſay, LORD I thank thee! I am a perverſe child, or GOD would not ſtrike me ſo often and ſo hard. Do not blame your heavenly Father, but blame yourſelves; he is a loving GOD, and a tender Father, "he is afflicted in all our afflictions:" therefore when GOD ſpake to *Moſes*, he ſpake out of the buſh, as much as to ſay, "*Moſes*, this buſh repreſents my people; as this buſh is burning with fire, ſo are my children to burn with affliction; but I am in the buſh; if the buſh burns, I will burn with it, I will be with them in the furnace, I will be with them in the water, and though the water come over them, it ſhall not overflow them."

Are ye GOD's children? Are ye converted and become as little children? Then will ye not long to go home and ſee your Father? O happy they that have gotten home before you; happy they that are up yonder, happy they who have aſcended above this field of conflict. I know not what you may think of it, but ſince I heard that ſome, whoſe hearts GOD was pleaſed to work upon, are gone to glory, I am ſometimes filled with grief, that GOD is not pleaſed to let me go home too. How can you ſee ſo much coldneſs among GOD's people? How can ye ſee GOD's people like the moon, waxing and waning? Who can but deſire to be forever with the LORD? Thanks be to GOD, the time is ſoon coming; thanks be to GOD, he will come and will not tarry. Do not be impatient, GOD in his own time will fetch you home. And though ye may be brought to ſhort allowance now, though ſome of you may be narrow in your circumſtances, yet do not repine; a GOD, and the goſpel of CHRIST, with brown bread, are great riches. In thy Father's houſe there

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is bread enough and to ſpare; though thou art now tormented, yet by and by thou ſhalt be comforted; the angels will look upon it as an honour to convey thee to *Abraham*'s boſom, though thou art but a *Lazarus* here. By the frame of my heart, I am much inclined to ſpeak comfortably to GOD's people.

But I only mention one thing more, and that is, if ye are converted, and become as little children, then for GOD's ſake take care of doing what children often do; they are too apt to quarrel one with another. O love one another; "he that dwells in love dwells in GOD, and GOD in him." *Joſeph* knew that his brethren were in danger of falling out, therefore when he left them, ſays he, "fall not out by the way." Ye are all children of the ſame Father, ye are all going to the ſame place; why ſhould ye differ? The world has enough againſt us, the devil has enough againſt us, without our quarelling with each other; O walk in love. If I could preach no more, if I was not able to hold out to the end of my ſermon, I would ſay as *John* did, when he was grown old and could not preach, "Little children, love one another:" if ye are GOD's children, then love one another. There is nothing grieves me more, than the differences amongſt GOD's people. O haſten that time, when we ſhall either go to heaven, or never quarrel any more!

Would to GOD I could ſpeak to all of you in this comfortable language; but my maſter tells me, I muſt "not give that which is holy to dogs, I muſt not caſt pearls before ſwine;" therefore, though I have been ſpeaking comfortably, yet what I have been ſaying, eſpecially in this latter part of the diſcourſe, belongs to children; it is children's bread, it belongs to GOD's people. If any of you are graceleſs, chriſtleſs, unconverted creatures, I charge you not to touch it, I fence it in the name of GOD; here is a flaming ſword turning every way to keep you from this bread of life, till ye are turned to JESUS CHRIST. And therefore, as I ſuppoſe many of you are unconverted, and graceleſs, go home, and away to your cloſets, and down with your ſtubborn hearts before GOD; if ye have not done it before, let this be the night: Or, do not ſtay till ye go home; begin now, while ſtanding here; pray to GOD, and let the language of thy heart be, LORD convert me!

LORD

LORD make me a little child, LORD JESUS let me not be baniſhed from thy kingdom! My dear friends, there is a great deal more implied in the words, than is expreſſed: when CHRIST ſays, "Ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," it is as much as to ſay, "ye ſhall certainly go to hell, ye ſhall certainly be damned, and dwell in the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever, ye ſhall go where the worm dies not, and where the fire is not quenched." The LORD GOD impreſs it upon your ſouls! May an arrow (as one lately wrote me in a letter) dipped in the blood of CHRIST, reach every unconverted ſinner's heart! May GOD fulfil the text to every one of your ſouls! It is he alone that can do it. If ye confeſs your ſins, and leave them, and lay hold on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Spirit of GOD ſhall be given you; if you will go and ſay, turn me, O my GOD! thou knoweſt not, O man, what the return of GOD may be to thee. Did I think that preaching would be to the purpoſe, did I think that arguments would induce you to come, I would continue my diſcourſe till midnight. And however ſome of you may hate me without a cauſe, would to GOD every one in this congregation was as much concerned for himſelf, as at preſent (bleſſed be GOD) I feel myſelf concerned for him. O that my head were waters, O that mine eyes were a fountain of tears, that I might weep over an unconverted, graceleſs, wicked, and adulterous generation. Precious ſouls, for GOD's ſake think what will become of you when ye die, if you die without being converted; if ye go hence without the wedding garment, GOD will ſtrike you ſpeechleſs, and ye ſhall be baniſhed from his preſence for ever and ever. I know ye cannot dwell with everlaſting burnings; behold then I ſhew you a way of eſcape; JESUS is the way, JESUS is the truth, the LORD JESUS CHRIST is the reſurrection and the life. It is his Spirit muſt convert you, come to CHRIST, and ye ſhall have it; and may GOD for CHRIST's ſake give it to you all, and convert you, that we may all meet, never to part again, in his heavenly kingdom; even ſo LORD JESUS, Amen and Amen.

SERMON

SERMON XXIV.

What think ye of CHRIST?

MATTHEW xxii. 42.

What think ye of CHRIST?

WHEN it pleaſed the eternal Son of GOD to tabernacle among us, and preach the glad tidings of ſalvation a fallen world, different opinions were entertained by diſrent parties concerning him. As to his perſon, ſome ſaid : was *Moſes*; others that he was *Elias*, *Jeremias*, or one of e ancient prophets; few acknowledged him to be what he ally was, GOD bleſſed for evermore. And as to his doctrine, ough the common people, being free from prejudice, were rſuaded of the heavenly tendency of his going about to do od, and for the generality, heard him gladly, and ſaid he as a good man; yet the envious, worldly-minded, ſelf-ghteous governors and teachers of the *Jewiſh* church, be- g grieved at his ſucceſs on the one hand, and unable (hav- g never been taught of GOD) to underſtand the purity of s doctrine, on the other; notwithſtanding our LORD ſpake never man ſpake, and did ſuch miracles which no man uld poſſibly do, unleſs GOD was with him; yet they not ly were ſo infatuated, as to ſay, that he deceived the people, t alſo were ſo blaſphemous as to affirm, that he was in ague with the devil himſelf, and caſt out devils by *Beelzebub* e prince of devils. Nay, our LORD's own brethren and nſmen, according to the fleſh, were ſo blinded by prejudice d unbelief, that on a certain day, when he went out to the multitudes in the fields, they ſent to take hold on him,

him, urging this as a reaſon for their conduct, "Th
was beſides himſelf."

Thus was the King and the LORD of glory judg
man's judgment, when manifeſt in fleſh: far be it fro
of his miniſters to expect better treatment. No, if we
in the ſpirit and power of our Maſter, in this, as in
other part of his ſufferings, we muſt follow his ſteps.
like reproaches which were caſt on him, will be throw
us alſo. Thoſe that received our LORD and his doc
will receive and hear us for his name's ſake. The poor, b
be GOD, as our preſent meeting abundantly teſtifies, re
the goſpel, and the common people hear us gladly; w
thoſe who are ſitting in *Moſes'* chair, and love to wear
robes, being ignorant of the righteouſneſs which is of
by faith in CHRIST JESUS, and having never felt the p
of GOD upon their hearts, will be continually crying
againſt us, as madmen, deceivers of the people, and a
under the influence of evil ſpirits.

But he is unworthy the name of a miniſter of the
of peace, who is unwilling, not only to have his nam
out as evil, but alſo to die for the truths of the
JESUS. It is the character of *hirelings* and *falſe pr*
who care not for the ſheep, to have all men ſpeak w
them. "Bleſſed are you, (ſays our LORD to his firſt ap
and in them to all ſucceeding miniſters) when men ſpe
manner of evil againſt you falſely for my name's ſake."
indeed it is impoſſible but ſuch offences muſt come: for
will always judge of others, according to the principles
which they act themſelves. And if they care not to
obedience to the doctrines which we deliver, they mu
ceſſarily, in ſelf-defence, ſpeak againſt the preacher
they ſhould be aſked that queſtion, which the Phari
old feared to have retorted on them, if they confe
John was a prophet, "Why then did you not beli
him?" In all ſuch caſes, we have nothing to do but to
our own hearts, and if we can aſſure our conſciences,
GOD, that we act with a ſingle eye to his glory,
chearfully to go on in our work, and not in the leaſt
gard what men or devils can ſay againſt, or do unto

But to return. You have heard what various thoughts there were concerning JESUS CHRIST, whilſt here on earth: nor is he otherwiſe treated, even now he is exalted to ſit down at the right hand of his Father in heaven. A ſtranger to chriſtianity, was he to hear, that we all profeſs to hold one LORD, would naturally infer, that we all thought and ſpoke one and the ſame thing about him. But alas! to our ſhame be it mentioned, though CHRIST be not divided in himſelf, yet profeſſors are ſadly divided in their thoughts about him; and that not only as to the circumſtances of his religion, but alſo of thoſe eſſential truths which muſt neceſſarily be believed and received by us, if ever we hope to be heirs of eternal ſalvation.

Some, and I fear a multitude which no man can eaſily number, there are amongſt us, who call themſelves chriſtians, and yet ſeldom or never ſeriouſly think of JESUS CHRIST at all. They can think of their ſhops and their farms, their plays, their balls, their aſſemblies, and horſe-races (entertainments which directly tend to exclude religion out of the world); but as for CHRIST, the author and finiſher of faith, the LORD who has bought poor ſinners with his precious blood, and who is the only thing worth thinking of, alas! he is not in all, or at moſt in very few of their thoughts. But believe me, O ye earthly, ſenſual, carnally-minded profeſſors, however little you may think of CHRIST now, or however induſtriouſly you may ſtrive to keep him out of your thoughts, by purſuing the luſt of the eye, the luſt of the fleſh, and the pride of life, yet there is a time coming, when you will wiſh you had thought of CHRIST more, and of your profits and pleaſures leſs. For the gay, the polite, the rich alſo muſt die as well as others, and leave their pomps and vanities, and all their wealth behind them. And O! what thoughts will you entertain concerning JESUS CHRIST, in that hour?

But I muſt not purſue theſe reflections: they would carry me too far from the main deſign of this diſcourſe, which is to ſhew, what thoſe who are truly deſirous to know how to worſhip GOD in ſpirit and in truth, ought to think concerning JESUS CHRIST, whom GOD hath ſent to be the end of the law for righteouſneſs to all them that ſhall believe.

I truſt, *my brethren*, you are more noble than to think me too ſtrict or ſcrupulous, in thus attempting to regulate your thoughts about JESUS CHRIST: for by our thoughts, as well as our words and actions, are we to be judged at the great day. And in vain do we hope to believe in, or worſhip CHRIST aright, unleſs our principles, on which our faith and practice are founded, are agreeable to the form of ſound words delivered to us in the ſcriptures of truth.

Beſides, many deceivers are gone abroad into the world. Mere heathen morality, and not JESUS CHRIST, is preached in moſt of our churches. And how ſhould people think rightly of CHRIST, of whom they have ſcarcely heard? Bear with me a little then, whilſt, to inform your conſciences, I aſk you a few queſtions concerning JESUS CHRIST: For there is no other name given under heaven, whereby we can be ſaved, but his.

Firſt, What think you about the perſon of CHRIST? "Whoſe Son is he?" This is the queſtion our LORD put to the Phariſees in the words following the text; and never was it more neceſſary to repeat this queſtion than in theſe laſt days. For numbers that are called after the name of CHRIST, and I fear, many that pretend to preach him, are ſo far advanced in the blaſphemous chair, as openly to deny his being really, truly, and properly GOD. But no one that ever was partaker of his Spirit, will ſpeak thus lightly of him. No; if they are aſked, as *Peter* and his brethren were, "But whom ſay ye that I am?" they will reply without heſitation, "Thou art CHRIST the Son of the ever-living GOD." For the confeſſion of our LORD's divinity, is the rock upon which he builds his church. Was it poſſible to take this away, the gates of hell would quickly prevail againſt it. My brethren, if JESUS CHRIST be not very GOD of very GOD, I would never preach the goſpel of CHRIST again. For it would not be goſpel; it would be only a ſyſtem of moral ethics: *Socrates*, *Cicero*, or any of the *Gentile* philoſophers, would be as good a Saviour as JESUS of *Nazareth*. It is the divinity of the LORD that gives a ſanction to his death, and makes him ſuch a high-prieſt as became us, one who by the infinite merits of his ſuffering could make a full, perfect, ſufficient ſacrifice, ſatisfaction and oblation to infinitely offended juſtice. And whatſoever

whatſoever miniſter of the church of *England*, makes uſe of er forms, and eats of her bread, and yet holds not this doc- rine (as I fear too many ſuch are crept in amongſt us) ſuch one belongs only to the ſynagogue of Satan. He is not a child or miniſter of GOD: no; he is a wolf in ſheep's cloath- ng; he is a child and miniſter of that wicked one the devil.

Many will think theſe hard ſayings: But I think it no breach of charity to affirm, that an *Arian* or *Socinian* cannot be a chriſtian. The one would make us believe JESUS CHRIST is only a *created* God, which is a ſelf-contradiction: and the other would have us look on him only as a good man; and inſtead of owning his death to be an atonement for the ſins of the world, would perſuade us, that CHRIST died only to ſeal the truth of his doctrine with his blood. But if JESUS CHRIST be no more than a mere man, if he be not truly GOD, he was the vileſt ſinner that ever appeared in the world. For he accepted of divine adoration from the man who had been born blind, as we read *John* ix. 38. "And he ſaid, LORD I believe, and worſhipped him." Beſides, if CHRIST be not properly GOD, our faith is vain, we are yet in our ſins: for no created being, though of the higheſt order, could poſſibly merit any thing at GOD's hands: it was our LORD's divinity, that alone qualified him to take away the ſins of the world; and therefore we hear St. *John* pronouncing ſo poſitively, that "the Word (JESUS CHRIST) was not only with GOD, but was GOD." For the like reaſon, St. *Paul* ſays, "that he was in the form of GOD: That in him dwelt all the fulneſs of the godhead bodily." Nay, JESUS CHRIST aſſumed the ſame title which GOD gave to himſelf, when he ſent *Moſes* to deliver his people *Iſrael*. "Before *Abraham* was, I AM." And again, "I and my father are one." Which laſt words, though our modern infidels would evade and wreſt, as they do other ſcriptures, to their own damnation, yet it is evident that the *Jews* underſtood our LORD, when he ſpake thus, as making himſelf equal with GOD; otherwiſe, why did they ſtone him as a blaſphemer? And now, why ſhould it be thought a breach of charity, to affirm, that thoſe who deny the divinity of JESUS CHRIST, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, cannot be chriſtians? For they are greater infidels than

the devils themſelves, who confeſſed that they knew who he was, "even the holy one of GOD." They not only believe, but, which is more than the unbelievers of this generation do, they tremble. And was it poſſible for arch-hereticks, to be releaſed from their chains of darkneſs, under which (unleſs they altered their principles before they died) they are now reſerved to the judgment of the great day, I am perſuaded they would inform us, how hell had convinced them of the divinity of JESUS CHRIST, and that they would adviſe their followers to abhor their principles, leſt they ſhould come into the ſame place, and thereby increaſe each others torments.

But, *Secondly*, What think you of the manhood or incarnation of JESUS CHRIST? For CHRIST was not only GOD, but he was GOD and man in one perſon. Thus runs the text and context, "When the Phariſees were gathered together, JESUS aſked them, ſaying, What think ye of CHRIST? Whoſe Son is he? They ſay unto him, The Son of *David*. How then, ſays our divine maſter, does *David* in ſpirit call him LORD?" From which paſſage it is evident, that we do not think rightly of the perſon of JESUS CHRIST, unleſs we believe him to be perfect GOD and perfect man, of a reaſonable ſoul and human fleſh ſubſiſting.

For it is on this account that he is called CHRIST, or the *anointed one*, who through his own voluntary offer was ſet apart by the father, and ſtrengthened and qualified by the anointing or communication of the Holy Ghoſt, to be a mediator between Him and offending man.

The reaſon why the Son of GOD took upon him our nature, was, the fall of our firſt parents. I hope there is no one preſent ſo atheiſtical, as to think, that man made himſelf: no, it was GOD that made us, and not we ourſelves. And I would willingly think, that no one is ſo blaſphemous as to ſuppoſe, that if GOD did make us, he made us ſuch creatures as we now find ourſelves to be. For this would be giving GOD's word the lie, which tells us, that "in the image of GOD (not in the image which we now bear on our ſouls) made he man." As GOD made man, ſo GOD made him perfect. He placed him in the garden of *Eden*, and condeſcended to enter into a covenant with him, promiſing him eternal

eternal life, upon condition of unſinning obedience; and threatening eternal death, if he broke his law, and did eat the forbidden fruit.

Man did eat; and herein acting as our repreſentative, thereby involved both himſelf and us in that curſe, which GOD, the righteous judge, had ſaid ſhould be the conſequence of his diſobedience. But here begins that myſtery of godlineſs, GOD manifeſted in the fleſh. For (ſing, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth!) the eternal Father, foreſeeing how Satan would bruiſe the heel of man, had in his eternal counſel provided a means whereby he might bruiſe that accurſed Serpent's head. Man is permitted to fall, and become ſubject to death; but JESUS, the only begotten Son of GOD, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of light, very GOD of very GOD, offers to die to make an atonement for his tranſgreſſion, and to fulfil all righteouſneſs in his ſtead. And becauſe it was impoſſible for him to do this as he was GOD, and yet ſince man had offended, it was neceſſary it ſhould be done in the perſon of man; rather than we ſhould periſh, this everlaſting GOD, this Prince of Peace, this Antient of Days, in the fulneſs of time, had a body prepared for him by the Holy Ghoſt, and became an infant. In this body he performed a compleat obedience to the law of GOD; whereby he, in our ſtead, fulfilled the covenant of works, and at laſt became ſubject to death, even death upon the croſs; that as GOD he might ſatisfy, as man he might obey and ſuffer; and being GOD and man in one perſon, might once more procure a union between GOD and our ſouls.

And now, What think you of this love of CHRIST? Do not you think it was wondrous great? Eſpecially when you conſider, that we were CHRIST's bitter enemies, and that he would have been infinitely happy in himſelf, notwithſtanding we had periſhed for ever. Whatever you may think of it, I know the bleſſed angels, who are not ſo much concerned in this myſtery of godlineſs as we, think moſt highly of it. They do, they will deſire to look into, and admire it, through all eternity. Why, why O ye ſinners, will you not think of this love of CHRIST? Surely it muſt melt down the moſt hardened heart. Whilſt I am ſpeaking, the thought of this infinite and condeſcending love fires and warms my ſoul. I

could dwell on it for ever. But it is expedient for you, that I ſhould aſk you another queſtion concerning JESUS CHRIST.

Thirdly, What think you about being juſtified by CHRIST? I believe I can anſwer for ſome of you; for many, I fear, think to be juſtified or looked upon as righteous in GOD's ſight, without JESUS CHRIST. But ſuch will find themſelves dreadfully miſtaken: for out of CHRIST, "GOD is a conſuming fire." Others ſatisfy themſelves, with believing that CHRIST was GOD and man, and that he came into the world to ſave ſinners in general: whereas, their chief concern ought to be, how they may be aſſured that JESUS CHRIST came into the world to ſave them in particular. "The life that I now live in the fleſh, (ſays the Apoſtle) is by faith of the Son of GOD, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me." Obſerve, *for me:* it is this immediate application of JESUS CHRIST to our own hearts, that renders his merits effectual to our eternal ſalvation. An unapplied CHRIST will do us no ſervice at all. Others there are who go ſtill farther: for they think that JESUS CHRIST is God-man; that he is to be applied to their hearts; and that they can be juſtified in GOD's ſight, only in or through him: but then they make him only in part a ſaviour: They are for doing what they can themſelves, and then JESUS CHRIST is to make up the deficiencies of their righteouſneſs. This is the ſum and ſubſtance of our modern divinity. And was it poſſible for me to know the thoughts of moſt that hear me this day, I believe they would tell me, this was the ſcheme they had laid, and perhaps depended on for ſome years, for their eternal ſalvation. Is it not then high time, my brethren, for you to entertain quite different thoughts concerning juſtification by JESUS CHRIST? For if you think thus, you are in the caſe of thoſe unhappy *Jews*, who went about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, and would not ſubmit to, and conſequently miſſed of that righteouſneſs which is of GOD by faith in CHRIST JESUS our LORD. What think you then, if I tell you, that you are to be juſtified freely through faith in JESUS CHRIST, without any regard to any work or fitneſs foreſeen in us at all? For ſalvation is the free gift of GOD. I know no fitneſs in man, but a fitneſs to be caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone for ever. Our righteouſneſſes, in GOD's ſight, are but as filthy rags;

rags: he cannot away with them. Our holineſs, if we have any, is not the cauſe, but the effect of our juſtification in GOD's ſight. "We love GOD, becauſe he firſt loved us." We muſt not come to GOD as the proud Phariſee did, bringing in as it were a reckoning of our ſervices; we muſt come in the temper and language of the poor Publican, ſmiting upon our breaſts, and ſaying, "GOD be merciful to me a ſinner:" for JESUS CHRIST juſtifies us whilſt we are ungodly. He came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance. The poor in ſpirit only, they who are willing to go out of themſelves, and rely wholly on the righteouſneſs of another, are ſo bleſſed as to be members of his kingdom. The righteouſneſs, the whole righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST, is to be imputed to us, inſtead of our own: "For we are not under the law, but under grace: and to as many as walk after this rule, peace be on them:" for they, and they only are the true *Iſrael* of GOD. In the great work of man's redemption, boaſting is entirely excluded: which could not be, if only one of our works was to be joined with the merits of CHRIST. Our ſalvation is all of GOD, from the beginning to the end: it is not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt: man has no hand in it: it is CHRIST who is to be made to us of GOD the Father, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and eternal redemption. His active as well as his paſſive obedience, is to be applied to poor ſinners. He has fulfilled all righteouſneſs in our ſtead, that we might become the righteouſneſs of GOD in him. All we have to do, is to lay hold on this righteouſneſs by faith: and the very moment we do apprehend it by a lively faith, that very moment we may be aſſured, that the blood of JESUS CHRIST has cleanſed us from all ſin: "For the promiſe is to us and to our children, and to as many as the LORD our GOD ſhall call." If we and our whole houſes believe, we ſhall be ſaved as well as the Jaylor and his houſe: for the righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST is an everlaſting, as well as a perfect righteouſneſs. It is as effectual to all who believe in him now, as formerly; and ſo it will be, till time ſhall be no more. Search the ſcriptures, as the *Bereans* did, and ſee whether theſe things are not ſo. Search St. *Paul's* epiſtles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, and there you will find this doctrine ſo plainly taught you, that, unleſs

unleſs you have eyes and ſee not, he that runs may read. Search the *Eleventh Article* of our Church: "We are accounted righteous before GOD, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST by faith, and not for our own works or deſervings."

This doctrine of our free juſtification by faith in CHRIST JESUS, however cenſured and evil ſpoken of by our preſent Maſters of *Iſrael*, was highly eſteemed by our wiſe fore fathers: for in the ſubſequent words of the forementioned article, it is called a moſt *wholeſome doctrine*, and very full of comfort: and ſo it is to all that are weary and heavy laden, and are truly willing to find reſt in JESUS CHRIST.

This is goſpel, this is glad tidings of great joy to all that feel themſelves poor, loſt, undone, damned ſinners. "Ho, every one that thirſteth, come unto the waters of life, and drink freely; come and buy without money and without price." Behold a fountain opened in your Saviour's ſide, for ſin and for all uncleanneſs. "Look unto him whom you have pierced:" look unto him by faith, and verily you ſhall be ſaved, though you came here only to ridicule and blaſpheme, and never thought of GOD or of CHRIST before.

Not that you muſt think GOD will ſave you becauſe, or on account of your faith; for faith is a work, and then you would be juſtified for your works: but when I tell you, we are to be juſtified by faith, I mean that faith is the inſtrument whereby the ſinner applies or brings home the redemption of JESUS CHRIST to his heart. And to whomſoever GOD gives ſuch a faith, (for it is the free gift of GOD) he may lift up his head with boldneſs, he need not fear; he is a ſpiritual ſon of our ſpiritual *David*; he is paſſed from death to life, he ſhall never come into condemnation. This is the goſpel which we preach. If any man or angel preach any other goſpel, than this of our being freely juſtified through faith in CHRIST JESUS, we have the authority of the greateſt Apoſtle, to pronounce him accurſed.

And now, my brethren, what think you of this fooliſhneſs of preaching? To you that have taſted the good word of life, who have been enlightened to ſee the riches of GOD's free grace in CHRIST JESUS, I am perſuaded it is precious, and has diſtilled like the dew into your ſouls. And O that

all

all were like-minded! But I am afraid, numbers are ready to go away contradicting and blaſpheming. Tell me, are there not many of you ſaying within yourſelves, "This is a "licentious doctrine; this preacher is opening a door for en- "couragement in ſin." But this does not ſurprize me at all, it is a ſtale, antiquated objection, as old as the doctrine of juſtification itſelf; and (which by the way is not much to the credit of thoſe who urge it now) it was made by an infidel. St. *Paul*, in his epiſtle to the *Romans*, after he had, in the firſt five chapters, demonſtrably proved the doctrine of juſtification by faith alone; in the ſixth, brings in an unbeliever ſaying, "Shall we continue in ſin then, that grace may abound?" But as he rejected ſuch an inference with a "GOD forbid!" ſo do I: for the faith which we preach, is not a dead ſpeculative faith, an aſſenting to things credible, as credible, as it is commonly defined: it is not a faith of the head only, but a faith of the heart. It is a living principle wrought in the ſoul, by the Spirit of the ever-living GOD, convincing the ſinner of his loſt, undone condition by nature; enabling him to apply and lay hold on the perfect righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST, freely offered him in the goſpel, and continually exciting him, out of a principle of love and gratitude, to ſhew forth that faith, by abounding in every good word and work. This is the ſum and ſubſtance of the doctrine that has been delivered. And if this be a licentious doctrine, judge ye. No, my brethren, this is not deſtroying, but teaching you how to do good works, from a proper principle. For to uſe the words of our Church in another of her Articles, "Works "done before the grace of CHRIST, and the inſpiration of "the Spirit, are not pleaſant to GOD, foraſmuch as they "ſpring not of faith in JESUS CHRIST; rather, for that they "are not done as GOD has willed and commanded them to "be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of ſin." So that they who bid you do, and then live, are juſt as wiſe as thoſe who would perſuade you to build a beautiful magnificent houſe, without laying a foundation.

It is true, the doctrine of our free juſtification by faith in CHRIST JESUS, like other goſpel truths, may and will be abuſed by men of corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith: but they who receive the truth of GOD in the love of it,

it, will always be ſhewing their faith by their works. For this reaſon, St. *Paul*, after he had told the *Epheſians*, "By grace they were ſaved through faith, not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt," immediately adds, "For we are his workmanſhip, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works." And in his epiſtle to *Titus*, having given him directions to tell the people they were juſtified by grace, directly ſubjoins, chap. iii. ver. 8. "I will that you affirm conſtantly, that they who have believed in GOD might be careful to maintain good works." Agreeable to this, we are told in our Twelfth Article, "That albeit good works, which are the fruits of "faith, and follow after juſtification, cannot put away our "ſins, and endure the ſeverity of GOD's judgment; yet are "they pleaſing and acceptable to GOD in CHRIST; and do "ſpring neceſſarily out of a true and lively faith, inſomuch, "that a lively faith may be as evidently known by them, as "a tree diſcerned by the fruit."

What would I give, that this Article was duly underſtood and preached by all that have ſubſcribed to it! The ark of the LORD would not then be driven into the wilderneſs, nor would ſo many perſons diſſent from the Church of *England*. For I am fully perſuaded, that it is not ſo much on account of rites and ceremonies, as our not preaching the truth as it is in JESUS, that ſo many have been obliged to go and ſeek for food elſewhere. Did not we fall from our eſtabliſhed doctrines, few, comparatively ſpeaking, would fall from the Eſtabliſhed Church. Where CHRIST is preached, though it be in a church or on a common, diſſenters of all denominations have, and do moſt freely come. But if our clergy will preach only the law, and not ſhew the way of ſalvation by faith in CHRIST JESUS, the charge of ſchiſm at the day of judgment, I fear, will chiefly lye at their door. The true ſheep of CHRIST know the voice of CHRIST's true ſhepherds, and ſtrangers they will not hear.

Obſerve, my dear brethren, the words of the Article, "Good works are the fruits of faith, and follow after juſtification." How then can they precede, or be any way the cauſe of it? Our perſons muſt be juſtified, before our performances can be accepted. GOD had reſpect to *Abel* before he had reſpect to his offering: and therefore the righteouſneſs

of

of JESUS CHRIST muſt be freely imputed to, and apprehended by us through faith, before we can offer an acceptable ſacrifice to GOD: for out of CHRIST, as I hinted before, GOD is a conſuming fire: and whatſoever is not of faith in CHRIST, is ſin.

That people miſtake the doctrine of free juſtification, I believe, is partly owing to their not rightly conſidering the different perſons to whom St. *Paul* and St. *James* wrote in their epiſtles; as alſo the different kind of juſtification each of them writes about. The former aſſerts in line upon line, argument upon argument, "That we are juſtified by faith alone:" The latter put this queſtion, "Was not *Abraham* juſtified by works?" From whence many, not conſidering the different views of theſe holy men, and the different perſons they wrote to, have blended and joined faith and works, in order to juſtify us in the ſight of GOD. But this is a capital miſtake; for St. *Paul* was writing to the *Jewiſh* proſelytes, who ſought righteouſneſs by the works, not of the ceremonial only, but of the moral law. In contradiſtinction to that, he tells them, they were to look for juſtification in GOD's ſight, only by the perfect righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST apprehended by faith. St. *James* had a different ſet of people to deal with; ſuch who abuſed the doctrines of free juſtification, and thought they ſhould be ſaved (as numbers among us do now) upon their barely profeſſing to believe on JESUS CHRIST. Theſe the holy Apoſtle endeavours wiſely to convince, that ſuch a faith was only a dead and falſe faith; and therefore, it behoved all who would be bleſſed with faithful *Abraham*, to ſhew forth their faith by their works, as he did: "For was not *Abraham* juſtified by works?" Did he not prove that his faith was a true juſtifying faith, by its being productive of good works? From whence it is plain, that St. *James* is talking of a declarative juſtification before men; ſhew me, demonſtrate, evidence to me, that thou haſt a true faith, by thy works: Whereas, St. *Paul* is talking only of our being juſtified in the ſight of GOD; and thus he proves, that *Abraham*, as we alſo are to be, was juſtified before ever the moral or ceremonial law was given to the *Jews*: for it is written, "*Abraham* believed in the LORD, and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs."

Take

Take the ſubſtance of what has been ſaid on this head, in the few following words. Every man that is ſaved, is juſtified three ways: *Firſt*, *meritoriouſly*, by the death of JESUS CHRIST: "It is the blood of JESUS CHRIST alone that cleanſes us from all ſin." *Secondly*, *inſtrumentally*, by faith: faith is the means or inſtrument whereby the merits of JESUS CHRIST are applied to the ſinner's heart: "Ye are all the children of GOD by faith in CHRIST JESUS." *Thirdly*, we are juſtified *declaratively*; namely, by good works: good works declare and prove to the world, that our faith is a true ſaving faith. "Was not *Abraham* juſtified by works?" And again, "Shew me thy faith by thy works."

It may not be improper to illuſtrate this doctrine by an example or two. I ſuppoſe no one will pretend to ſay, that there was any fitneſs for ſalvation in *Zaccheus* the publican, when he came to ſee JESUS out of no better principle, than that whereby perhaps thouſands are led to hear me preach; I mean, curioſity: but JESUS CHRIST prevented and called him by his free grace, and ſweetly, but irreſiſtibly inclined him to obey that call; as, I pray GOD, he may influence all you that come only to ſee who the preacher is. *Zaccheus* received our LORD joyfully into his houſe, and at the ſame time by faith received him into his heart: *Zaccheus* was then freely juſtified in the ſight of GOD. But behold the immediate fruits of that juſtification! He ſtands forth in the midſt, and as before he had believed in his heart, he now makes confeſſion with his mouth to ſalvation: "Behold, LORD, the half of my goods I give unto the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore him four-fold." And thus it will be with thee, O believer, as ſoon as ever GOD's dear Son is revealed in thee by a living faith; thou wilt have no reſt in thy ſpirit, till out of love and gratitude for what GOD has done for thy ſoul, thou ſheweſt forth thy faith by thy works.

Again, I ſuppoſe every body will grant there was no fitneſs for ſalvation in the perſecutor *Saul*; no more than there is in thoſe perſecuting zealots of theſe laſt days, who are already breathing out threatenings, and, if in their power, would breathe out ſlaughter alſo, againſt the diſciples of the LORD.

Now

Now our LORD, we know, freely prevented him by his grace, (and O that he would thus effectually call the perſecutors of this generation) and by a light from heaven ſtruck him to the ground. At the ſame time, by his Spirit, he pricked him to the heart, convinced him of ſin, and cauſed him to cry out, "Who art thou, LORD?" CHRIST replies, "I am JESUS whom thou perſecuteſt." Faith then was inſtantaneouſly given to him, and behold, immediately *Saul* cries out, "LORD, what wouldſt thou have me to do?" And ſo will every poor ſoul that believes on the LORD JESUS with his whole heart. He will be always aſking, LORD, what ſhall I do for thee? LORD, what wouldſt thou have me to do? Not to juſtify himſelf, but only to evidence the ſincerity of his love and thankfulneſs to his all-merciful High-prieſt, for plucking him as a firebrand out of the fire.

Perhaps many ſelf-righteous perſons amongſt you, may flatter yourſelves, that you are not ſo wicked as either *Zaccheus* or *Saul* was, and conſequently there is a greater fitneſs for ſalvation in you than in them. But if you think thus, indeed you think more highly of yourſelves than you ought to think: for by nature we are all alike, all equally fallen ſhort of the glory of GOD, all equally dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and there needs the ſame almighty power to be exerted in converting any one of the moſt ſober, good-natured, moral perſons here preſent, as there was in converting the publican *Zaccheus*, or that notorious perſecutor *Saul*. And was it poſſible for you to aſcend into the higheſt heaven, and to enquire of the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, I am perſuaded they would tell you this doctrine is from GOD. But we have a more ſure word of prophecy, to which we do well to give heed, as unto a light ſhining in a dark place. My brethren, the word is nigh you; ſearch the ſcriptures; beg of GOD to make you willing to be ſaved in this day of his power: for it is not fleſh and blood, but the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST, that alone can reveal theſe things unto you.

Fourthly and *Laſtly*, What think you of JESUS CHRIST being formed within you? For whom CHRIST juſtifies, them he alſo ſanctifies. Although he finds, yet he does not leave us unholy. A true chriſtian may not ſo properly be ſaid to live, as JESUS CHRIST to live in him. For they only

that are led by the Spirit of CHRIST, are the true ſons of GOD.

As I obſerved before, ſo I tell you again, the faith which we preach is not a dead, but a lively active faith wrought in the ſoul, working a thorough change, by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, in the whole man: and unleſs CHRIST be thus in you, notwithſtanding you may be orthodox as to the foregoing principles, notwithſtanding you may have good deſires, and attend conſtantly on the means of grace; yet, in St. *Paul's* opinion, you are out of a ſtate of ſalvation. "Know you not, (ſays that Apoſtle to the *Corinthians*, a church famous for its gifts above any church under heaven) that CHRIST is in you, (by his Spirit) unleſs you are reprobates?"

For CHRIST came not only to ſave us from the guilt, but from the power of our ſins: till he has done this, however he may be a Saviour to others, we can have no aſſurance or well-grounded hope, that he has ſaved us: for it is by receiving his bleſſed Spirit into our hearts, and feeling him witneſſing with our ſpirits, that we are the ſons of GOD, that we can be certified of our being ſealed to the day of redemption.

This is a great myſtery; but I ſpeak of CHRIST and the new-birth. Marvel not at my aſking you, what you think about CHRIST being formed within you? For either GOD muſt change his nature, or we ours. For as in *Adam* we all have ſpiritually died, ſo all that are effectually ſaved by CHRIST, muſt in CHRIST be ſpiritually made alive. His only end in dying and riſing again, and interceding for us now in heaven, is to redeem us from the miſery of our fallen nature, and, by the operation of his bleſſed Spirit, to make us meet to be partakers of the heavenly inheritance with the ſaints in light. None but thoſe that thus are changed by his grace here, ſhall appear with him in glory hereafter.

Examine yourſelves, therefore, my brethren, whether you are in the faith; prove yourſelves; and think it not ſufficient to ſay in your creed, I believe in JESUS CHRIST: many ſay ſo, who do not believe, who are reprobates, and yet in a ſtate of death. You take GOD's name in vain, when you call him Father, and your prayers are turned into ſin, unleſs you believe in CHRIST, ſo as to have your life hid with him in

OD, and to receive life and nouriſhment from him, as anches do from the vine.

I know, indeed, the men of this generation deny there is ny ſuch thing as feeling CHRIST within them; but alas! o what a dreadful condition would ſuch reduce us, even to he ſtate of the abandoned heathen, who, St. *Paul* tells us, ' were paſt feeling." The Apoſtle prays, that the *Epheſians* ay abound in all knowledge and ſpiritual underſtanding, or it might be rendered, ſpiritual ſenſation. And in the office r the viſitation of the ſick, the miniſter prays, that the LORD ay make the ſick perſon know and feel, that there is no ther name under heaven given unto men, in whom and rough whom they may receive health and ſalvation, but aly the name of our LORD JESUS. For there is a ſpiritual, well as a corporeal feeling; and though this is not communicated to us in a ſenſible manner, as outward objects affect our ſenſes, yet it is as real as any ſenſible or viſible ſenſation, and may be as truly felt and diſcerned by the ſoul, as ny impreſſion from without can be felt by the body. All ho are born again of GOD, know that I lie not.

What think you, Sirs, did *Naaman* feel, when he was cured F his leproſy? Did the woman feel virtue coming out of ESUS CHRIST, when ſhe touched the hem of his garment, nd was cured of her bloody iſſue? So ſurely mayſt thou feel, believer, when JESUS CHRIST dwelleth in thy heart. I ray GOD to make you all know and feel this, ere you depart ence.

O my brethren, my heart is enlarged towards you. I truſt feel ſomething of that hidden, but powerful preſence of HRIST, whilſt I am preaching to you. Indeed it is ſweet, is exceedingly comfortable. All the harm I wiſh you, who ithout cauſe are my enemies, is, that you felt the like. Beeve me, though it would be hell to my ſoul, to return to a tural ſtate again, yet I would willingly change ſtates with u for a little while, that you might know what it is to have HRIST dwelling in your hearts by faith. Do not turn your cks; do not let the devil hurry you away: be not afraid of nvictions; do not think worſe of the doctrine, becauſe eached without the church walls. Our LORD, in the days his fleſh, preached on a mount, in a ſhip, and a field; and

I am perſuaded, many have felt his gracious preſence here. Indeed we ſpeak what we know. Do not reject the kingdom of GOD againſt yourſelves: be ſo wiſe as to receive our witneſs. I cannot, I will not let you go; ſtay a little, let us reaſon together. However lightly you may eſteem your ſouls, I know our LORD has ſet an unſpeakable value on them. He thought them worthy of his moſt precious blood. I beſeech you, therefore, O ſinners, be ye reconciled to GOD. I hope you do not fear being accepted in the beloved. Behold, he calleth you; behold, he prevents and follows you with his mercy, and hath ſent forth his ſervants into the highways and hedges, to compel you to come in. Remember then, that at ſuch an hour of ſuch a day, in ſuch a year, in this place, you were all told what you ought to think concerning JESUS CHRIST. If you now periſh, it will not be for lack of knowledge: I am free from the blood of you all. You cannot ſay I have been preaching damnation to you; you cannot ſay I have, like legal preachers, been requiring you to make brick without ſtraw. I have not bidden you to make yourſelves ſaints, and then come to GOD; but I have offered you ſalvation on as cheap terms as you can deſire. I have offered you CHRIST's whole wiſdom, CHRIST's whole righteouſneſs, CHRIST's whole ſanctification and eternal redemption, if you will but believe on him. If you ſay, you cannot believe, you ſay right; for faith, as well as every other bleſſing, is the gift of GOD: but then wait upon GOD, and who knows but he may have mercy on thee? Why do we not entertain more loving thoughts of CHRIST? Or do you think he will have mercy on others, and not on you? But are you not ſinners? And did not JESUS CHRIST come into the world to ſave ſinners? If you ſay you are the chief of ſinners; I anſwer, that will be no hindrance to your ſalvation, indeed it will not, if you lay hold on him by faith. Read the Evangeliſts, and ſee how kindly he behaved to his diſciples who fled from and denied him: "Go tell my brethren," ſays he. He did not ſay, Go tell thoſe traitors; but, "Go tell my brethren, and *Peter*:" as though he had ſaid, Go tell my brethren in general, and poor *Peter* in particular, "that I am riſen;" O comfort his poor drooping heart, tell him I am reconciled to him; bid him weep no more ſo bitterly: for though with

oaths

baths and curſes he thrice denied me, yet I have died for his ſins, I am riſen again for his juſtification: I freely forgive him all. Thus ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, was our all-merciful High-prieſt. And do you think he has changed his nature, and forgets poor ſinners, now he is exalted to the right-hand of GOD? No, he is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, and ſitteth there only to make interceſſion for us. Come then, ye harlots, come ye publicans, come ye moſt abandoned of ſinners, come and believe on JESUS CHRIST. Though the whole world deſpiſe you and caſt you out, yet he will not diſdain to take you up. O amazing, O infinitely condeſcending love! even you, he will not be aſhamed to call his brethren. How will you eſcape if you neglect ſuch a glorious offer of ſalvation? What would the damned ſpirits, now in the priſon of hell, give, if CHRIST was ſo freely offered to their ſouls? And why are not we lifting up our eyes in torments? Does any one out of this great multitude dare ſay, he does not deſerve damnation? If not, why are we left, and others taken away by death? What is this but an inſtance of GOD's free grace, and a ſign of his good will towards us? Let GOD's goodneſs lead us to repentance! O let there be joy in heaven over ſome of you repenting! Though we are in a field, I am perſuaded the bleſſed angels are hovering now around us, and do long, "as the hart panteth after the water-brooks," to ſing an anthem at your converſion. Bleſſed be GOD, I hope their joy will be fulfilled. An awful ſilence appears amongſt us. I have good hope that the words which the LORD has enabled me to ſpeak in your ears this day, have not altogether fallen to the ground. Your tears and deep attention, are an evidence, that the LORD GOD is amongſt us of a truth. Come, ye Phariſees, come and ſee, in ſpite of your ſatanical rage and fury, the LORD JESUS is getting himſelf the victory. And brethren, I ſpeak the truth in CHRIST, I lie not, if one ſoul of you, by the bleſſing of GOD, be brought to think ſavingly of JESUS CHRIST this day, I care not if my enemies were permitted to carry me to priſon, and put my feet faſt in the ſtocks, as ſoon as I have delivered this ſermon. Brethren, my heart's deſire and prayer to GOD is, that you may be ſaved. For this cauſe I follow my Maſter without the camp. I care not how much of his ſacred reproach I bear, ſo that

ſome of you be converted from the errors of your ways. I rejoice, yea and I will rejoice. Ye men, ye devils, do your worſt: the LORD who ſent, will ſupport me. And when CHRIST, who is our life, and whom I have now been preaching, ſhall appear, I alſo, together with his deſpiſed little ones, ſhall appear with him in glory. And then, what will you think of CHRIST? I know what you will think of him. You will then think him to be the faireſt among ten thouſand: You will then think and feel him to be a juſt and ſin-avenging judge. Be ye then perſuaded to kiſs him leſt he be angry, and ſo you be baniſhed for ever from the preſence of the LORD. Behold, I come to you as the angel did to *Lot*. Flee, flee, for your lives; haſte, linger no longer in your ſpiritual *Sodom*, for otherwiſe you will be eternally deſtroyed. Numbers, no doubt, there are amongſt you, that may regard me no more than *Lot*'s ſons-in-law regarded him. I am perſuaded I ſeem to ſome of you as one that mocketh: but I ſpeak the truth in CHRIST, I lie not; as ſure as fire and brimſtone was rained from the LORD out of heaven, to deſtroy *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, ſo ſurely, at the great day, ſhall the vials of GOD's wrath be poured on you, if you do not think ſeriouſly of, and act agreeable to the goſpel of the LORD's CHRIST. Behold, I have told you before; and I pray GOD, all you that forget him may ſeriouſly think of what has been ſaid, before he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you.

Now to GOD the Father, &c.

SERMON

SERMON XXV.

The wiſe and fooliſh Virgins.

MATTHEW XXV. 13.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of man cometh.

THE apoſtle *Paul*, in his epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, informs us, "That it is appointed for all men once to die; after that is the judgment." And I think, if any conſideration be ſufficient to awaken a ſleeping drowſy world, it muſt be this, That there will be a day wherein theſe heavens ſhall be wrapt up like a ſcroll, this element melt with fervent heat, the earth and all things therein be burnt up, and every ſoul, of every nation and language, ſummoned to appear before the dreadful tribunal of the righteous Judge of quick and dead, to receive rewards and puniſhments, according to the deeds done in their bodies. The great apoſtle juſt mentioned, when brought before *Felix*, could think of no better means to convert that ſinful man, than to reaſon of temperance, righteouſneſs, and more eſpecially of a judgment to come. The firſt might in ſome meaſure affect, but, I am perſuaded, it was the laſt conſideration, a judgment to come, that made him to tremble: and ſo bad as the world is now grown, yet there are few have their conſciences ſo far ſeared, as to deny that there will be a reckoning hereafter. The promiſcuous diſpenſations of providence in this life, wherein we ſee good men afflicted, deſtitute, tormented, and the wicked permitted triumphantly to ride over their heads, has been always looked upon as an indiſputable argument, by the generality of men, that there will be a day in which GOD will judge the world in righteouſneſs, and adminiſter equity unto his people. Some indeed

are ſo bold as to deny it, while they are engaged in the purſuit of the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life. But follow them to their death-beds, aſk them, when their ſouls are ready to launch into eternity, what they then think of a judgment to come? and they will tell you, they dare not give their conſciences the lie any longer. They feel a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation in their hearts. Since then theſe things are ſo, does it not highly concern each of us, my brethren, before we come on a bed of ſickneſs, ſeriouſly to examine how the account ſtands between GOD and our ſouls, and how it will fare with us in that day? As for the openly prophane, the drunkard, the whoremonger, the adulterer, and ſuch-like, there is no doubt of what will become of them; without repentance they ſhall never enter into the kingdom of GOD and his CHRIST: no; their damnation ſlumbereth not; a burning fiery *Tophet*, kindled by the fury of GOD's eternal wrath, is prepared for their reception, wherein they muſt ſuffer the vengeance of eternal fire. Nor is there the leaſt doubt of the ſtate of true believers. For though they are deſpiſed and rejected of natural men, yet being born again of GOD, they are heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST. They have the earneſt of the promiſed inheritance in their hearts, and are aſſured, that a new and living way is made open for them, into the holy of holies, by the blood of JESUS CHRIST, into which an abundant entrance ſhall be adminiſtered to them at the great day of account. The only queſtion is, what will become of the *almoſt Chriſtian*, one that is content to go, as he thinks, in a middle way to heaven, without being prophane on the one hand, or, as he falſly imagines, righteous over-much on the other? Many there are in every congregation, and conſequently ſome here preſent, of this ſtamp. And what is worſt of all, it is more eaſy to convince the moſt notorious publicans and ſinners of their being out of a ſtate of ſalvation, than any of theſe. Notwithſtanding, if JESUS CHRIST may be our judge, they ſhall as certainly be rejected and diſowned by him at the laſt day, as though they lived in open defiance of all his laws. For what ſays our LORD in the parable of which the words of the text are a concluſion, and which I intend to make the ſubject of my preſent diſcourſe. "Then," at the day of judgment, which

he

id been diſcourſing of in the foregoing, and proſecutes in
chapter, " ſhall the kingdom of heaven, (the ſtate of pro-
s in the goſpel church) be likened unto ten virgins, who
their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." In
h words, is a manifeſt alluſion to a cuſtom prevailing in
LORD's time among the *Jews*, at marriage ſolemnities,
h were generally at night, and at which it was cuſtomary
ne perſons of the bride-chamber to go out in proceſſion,
many lights, to meet the bridegroom. By the *bridegroom*,
are here to underſtand JESUS CHRIST. The church, i. e.
believers, are his *ſpouſe*; he is united to them by one ſpi-
ven in this life; but the ſolemnizing of theſe ſacred nup-
is reſerved till the day of judgment, when he ſhall come
ke them home to himſelf, and preſent them before men
angels, as his purchaſe, to his Father, without ſpot or
kle, or any ſuch thing. By the ten virgins we are to
rſtand, the profeſſors of chriſtianity in general. All are
l virgins, becauſe all are called to be ſaints. Whoſoever
s the name of CHRIST, is obliged by that very profeſſion
part from all iniquity. But the pure and chaſte in heart,
ne only perſons that will be ſo bleſſed as to ſee GOD. As
IST was born of a virgin, ſo he can dwell in none but vir-
ouls, made pure and holy by the cohabitation of his holy
. What ſays the apoſtle? " All are not *Iſraelites* that are
ael," all are not chriſtians that are called after the name
HRIST: No, ſays our LORD, in the 2d verſe, " Five of
virgins were wiſe," true believers, " and five were
h," formal hypocrites. But why are five ſaid to be wiſe,
he other five fooliſh? Hear what our LORD ſays in the
ving verſes; " They that were fooliſh took their lamps,
ook no oil with them: but the wiſe took oil in their veſ-
vith their lamps." They that were fooliſh took their
of an outward profeſſion. They would go to church,
er ſeveral manuals of prayers, come perhaps into a field
ar a ſermon, give at a collection, and receive the ſacra-
conſtantly, nay, oftner than once a month. But then
ay the miſtake; they had no oil in their lamps, no prin-
of grace, no living faith in their hearts, without which,
h we ſhould give all our goods to feed the poor, and our
to be burnt, it would profit us nothing. In ſhort, they

were exact, nay, perhaps ſuperſtitious bigots as to the form, but all the while they were ſtrangers to, and, in effect, denied the power of godlineſs in their hearts. They would go to church, but at the ſame time, think it no harm to go to a ball or an aſſembly, notwithſtanding they promiſed at their baptiſm, to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. They were ſo exceedingly fearful of being righteous over-much, that they would even perſecute thoſe that were truly devout, if they attempted to go a ſtep farther than themſelves. In one word, they never effectually felt the power of the world to come. They thought they might be chriſtians without ſo much inward feeling, and therefore, notwithſtanding their high pretenſions, had only a name to live.

And now, Sirs, let me pauſe a while, and in the name of GOD, whom I endeavour to ſerve in the goſpel of his dear Son, give me leave to aſk one queſtion. Whilſt I have been drawing, though in miniature, the character of theſe fooliſh virgins, have not many of your conſciences made the application, and with a ſmall, ſtill, though articulate voice, ſaid, Thou man, thou woman, art one of thoſe fooliſh virgins, for thy ſentiments and practice agree thereto? Stifle not, but rather encourage theſe convictions; and who knows, but that LORD who is rich in mercy to all that call upon him faithfully, may ſo work upon you even by this fooliſhneſs of preaching, as to make you wiſe virgins before you return home?

What they were you ſhall know immediately: "But the wiſe took oil in their veſſels with their lamps." Obſerve, the wiſe, the true believers, had their lamps as well as the fooliſh virgins; for chriſtianity does not require us to caſt off all outward forms; we may uſe forms, and yet not be formal: for inſtance, it is poſſible to worſhip GOD in a ſet form of prayer, and yet worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth. And therefore, brethren, let us not judge one another. The wiſe virgins had their lamps; herein did not lie the difference between them and the fooliſh, that one worſhipped GOD with a form, and the other did not: No: as the Phariſee and Publican went up to the temple to pray, ſo theſe wiſe and fooliſh virgins might go to the ſame place of worſhip, and ſit under the ſame miniſtry; but then the wiſe took oil in their veſſels with their lamps; they kept up the form, but did not reſt in it; their

words in prayer were the language of their hearts, and they were no ſtrangers to inward feelings; they were not afraid of ſearching doctrines, nor affronted when miniſters told them they deſerved to be damned; they were not ſelf-righteous, but were willing that JESUS CHRIST ſhould have all the glory of their ſalvation; they were convinced that the merits of JESUS CHRIST were to be apprehended only by faith; but yet were they as careful to maintain good works, as though they were to be juſtified by them: in ſhort, their obedience flowed from love and gratitude, and was chearful, conſtant, uniform, univerſal, like that obedience which the holy angels pay our Father in heaven.

Here then let me exhort you to pauſe again; and if any of you can faithfully apply theſe characters to your hearts, give GOD the glory, and take the comfort to your own ſouls; you are not falſe but true believers. JESUS CHRIST has been made of GOD to you wiſdom, even that wiſdom, whereby you ſhall be made wiſe unto ſalvation. GOD ſees a difference between you and fooliſh virgins, if natural men will not. You need not be uneaſy, though one chance and fate in this life may happen to you both. I ſay, one chance and fate; for, ver. 5. "while the bridegroom tarried," in the ſpace of time which paſſed between our LORD's aſcenſion and his coming again to judgment, "they all ſlumbered and ſlept." The wiſe as well as fooliſh died, for duſt we are, and to duſt we muſt return. It is no reflection at all upon the divine goodneſs, that believers, as well as hypocrites, muſt paſs through the valley of the ſhadow of death; for CHRIST has taken away the ſting of death, ſo that we need fear no evil. It is to them a paſſage to everlaſting life: death is only terrible to thoſe who have no hope, becauſe they live without faith in the world. Whoſoever there are amongſt you, that have received the firſt-fruits of the ſpirit, I am perſuaded you are ready to cry out, we would not live here always, we long to be diſſolved, that we may be with JESUS CHRIST; and though worms muſt deſtroy our bodies as well as others, yet we are content, being aſſured that our Redeemer liveth, that he will ſtand at the latter days upon the earth, and that in our fleſh we ſhall ſee GOD.

But it is not ſo with hypocrites and unbelievers beyond the grave; for what ſays our LORD? "And at midnight:" obſerve,

obſerve, at midnight, when all was huſhed and quiet, and *no* one dreaming of any ſuch thing, "a cry was made;" the voice of the arch-angel and the trump of GOD was heard ſounding this general alarm; to things in heaven, to things in earth, and to things in the waters under the earth, "BEHOLD!" mark how this awful ſummons is uſhered in with the word *behold*, to engage our attention? "Behold the bridegroom cometh!" even JESUS CHRIST, the deſire of nations, the bridegroom of his ſpouſe the church: Becauſe he tarried for a while to exerciſe the faith of ſaints, and give ſinners ſpace to repent, ſcoffers were apt to cry out, "Where is the promiſe of his coming? But the LORD is not ſlack concerning his promiſe, as theſe men account ſlackneſs." For behold, he that was to come, now cometh, and will not tarry any longer: he cometh to be glorified in his ſaints, and to take vengeance on them that know not GOD, and have not obeyed his goſpel: he cometh not as a poor deſpiſed *Galilean*; not to be laid in a ſtinking manger; not to be deſpiſed and rejected of men; not to be blindfolded, ſpit upon, and buffeted; not to be nailed to an accurſed tree; he cometh not as the Son of man, but as he really was, the eternal Son of the eternal GOD! He cometh riding on the wings of the wind, in the glory of the Father and his holy angels, and to be had in everlaſting reverence of all that ſhall be round about him. "Go ye forth to meet him;" ariſe, ye dead, ye fooliſh, as well as wiſe virgin, ariſe and come to judgment. Multitudes, no doubt, that hear this awakening cry, would rejoice if the rocks might fall on, and the hills cover them from the preſence of the Lamb: what would they give, if as they lived as beaſts, they might now die like the beaſts that periſh? How would they rejoice, if thoſe ſame excuſes which they made on this ſide eternity for not attending on holy ordinances, would ſerve to keep them from appearing before the heavenly bridegroom! But as *Adam*, notwithſtanding his fig-leaves, and the trees of the garden, could not hide himſelf from GOD, when arreſted with an "*Adam*, where art thou?" So now the decree is gone forth, and the trump of GOD has given its laſt ſound; all tongues, people, nations, and languages, both wiſe and fooliſh virgins, muſt come into his preſence, and bow beneath his footſtool; even *Pontius Pilate*, *Annas* and *Caiaphas*;

Caiaphas; even the proud perſecuting high-prieſts and Phariſees of this generation, muſt appear before him: for ſays our LORD, "then, (when the cry was made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh!) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the graves were opened, the ſea gave up its dead, and "all thoſe virgins, both wiſe and fooliſh, aroſe and trimmed their lamps," or endeavoured to put themſelves in a proper poſture to meet the bridegroom.

But how may we imagine the fooliſh virgins were ſurprized, when, notwithſtanding their high thoughts and proud imaginations of their ſecurity, they now find themſelves wholly naked, and void of that inward holineſs and purity of heart, without which no man living at that day ſhall comfortably meet the LORD! I doubt not, but many of theſe fooliſh virgins, whilſt in this world, were cloathed in purple and fine linnen, fared ſumptuouſly every day, and diſdained to ſet the wiſe virgins, ſome of whom might be as poor as *Lazarus*, even with the dogs of their flock. Theſe were looked upon by them as enthuſiaſts and madmen, as perſons that were righteous over-much, and who intended to turn the world upſide down: but now death hath opened their eyes, and convinced them, to their eternal ſorrow, that he is not a true chriſtian, who is only one outwardly. Now they find (though, alas! too late) they, and not the wiſe virgins, had been beſide themſelves. Now their proud hearts are made to ſtoop, their lofty looks are brought low; and as *Dives* entreated that *Lazarus* might dip the tip of his finger in water, and be ſent to cool his tongue, ſo theſe fooliſh virgins, theſe formal hypocrites, are obliged to turn beggars to thoſe whom they once deſpiſed: "Give us of your oil;" O! impart to us a little of that grace and holy ſpirit, for the inſiſting on which we fools accounted your lives madneſs; for alas! "our lamps are gone out;" we had only the form of godlineſs; we were whited ſepulchres; we were heart-hypocrites; we contented ourſelves with deſiring to be good; and though confident of ſalvation whilſt we lived, yet our hope is entirely gone, now GOD has taken away our ſouls: Give us therefore, O! give us, though we once deſpiſed you, give us of your oil, for our lamps of an outward profeſſion, and tranſient convictions, are quite gone out. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, ſaith

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the LORD." My brethren in CHRIST, hear what the fooliſh ſay to the wiſe virgins, and learn in patience to poſſeſs your ſouls. If you are true followers of the lowly JESUS, I am perſuaded you have your names caſt out, and all manner of evil ſpoken falſly againſt you, for his name's ſake; for no one ever did or will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, without ſuffering perſecution; nay, I doubt not but your chief foes are thoſe of your own houſhold: tell me, do not your carnal relations and friends vex your tender ſouls day by day, in bidding you ſpare yourſelves, and take heed leſt you go too far: And as you paſſed along to come and hear the word of GOD, have you not heard many a Phariſee cry out, Here comes another troop of his followers! Brethren, be not ſurprized, CHRIST's ſervants were always the world's fools; you know it hated him before it hated you. Rejoice and be exceeding glad. Yet a little while, and behold the bridegroom cometh, and then ſhall you hear theſe formal ſcoffing Phariſees ſaying unto you, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." When you are reviled, revile not again: when you ſuffer, threaten not; commit your ſouls into the hands of him that judgeth righteouſly: for behold the day cometh, when the children of GOD ſhall ſpeak for themſelves.

The wiſe virgins, in the parable, no doubt endured the ſame cruel mockings as you may do; but as the lamb before the ſhearers is dumb, ſo in this life opened they not their mouths; but now we find they can give their enemies an anſwer: "Not ſo, leſt there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that ſell, and buy for yourſelves." Theſe words are not to be underſtood as though they were ſpoken in an inſulting manner; for true charity teaches us to uſe the worſt of ſinners, and our moſt bitter enemies, with the meekneſs and gentleneſs of CHRIST: Though *Dives* was in hell, yet *Abraham* does not ſay, Thou villain, but only, "Son, remember:" and I am perſuaded, had it been in the power of theſe wiſe virgins, they would have dealt with the fooliſh virgins, as, GOD knows, I would willingly deal with my moſt inveterate enemies, not only give them of their oil, but alſo exalt them to the right hand of GOD. It was not then for want of love, but the fear of wanting a ſufficiency for themſelves, that made them return this anſwer, "Not

ſo,

ſo, leſt there be not enough for us and you :" For they that have moſt grace, have none to ſpare; none but ſelf-righteous, fooliſh virgins think they are good enough, or have already attained. Thoſe who are truly wiſe are always moſt diſtruſtful of themſelves, preſſing forwards to the things that are before, and think it well if after they have done all, they can make their calling and election ſure. " Not ſo, leſt there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that ſell, and buy for yourſelves." Theſe words indeed ſeem to be ſpoken in a triumphant, but certainly they were uttered in the moſt compaſſionate manner; " go ye to them that ſell, and buy for yourſelves;" unhappy virgins! you accounted our lives folly; whilſt with you in the body, how often have you condemned us for our zeal in running to hear the word of GOD, and looked upon us as enthuſiaſts, for talking and affirming, that we muſt be led by the ſpirit, and walk by the ſpirit, and feel the ſpirit of GOD witneſſing with our ſpirits, that we are his children? But now you would be glad to be partakers of this privilege, but it is not ours to give. You contented yourſelves with ſeeking, when you ſhould have been ſtriving to enter in at the ſtrait gate. And now go to them that ſell, if you can, and buy for yourſelves.

And what ſay you to this, ye fooliſh formal profeſſors? For I doubt not but curioſity and novelty hath brought many ſuch, even to this deſpiſed place, to hear a ſermon. Can you hear this reply to the fooliſh virgins, and yet not tremble? Why, yet a little while, and thus it ſhall be done to you. Rejoice and bolſter yourſelves up in your duties and forms; endeavour to cover your nakedneſs with the fig-leaves of an outward profeſſion and a legal righteouſneſs, and deſpiſe the true ſervants of CHRIST as much as you pleaſe, yet know, that all your hopes will fail you when GOD brings you into judgment. For not he who commendeth himſelf is juſtified, but he whom the LORD commendeth.

But to return; we do not hear of any reply the fooliſh virgins make: No, their conſciences condemned them; like the perſon without a wedding-garment, they are ſtruck dumb, and are now filled with anxious thoughts how they ſhall buy oil, that they may lift up their heads before the bridegroom. " But whilſt they went to buy," ver. 10, whilſt they were thinking

thinking what they ſhould do, the bridegroom, the LORD JESUS, the king, the huſband of his ſpouſe the church, cometh, attended with thouſands and twenty times ten thouſands of ſaints and angels, publicly to count up his jewels; "and they that were ready," the wiſe virgins who had oil in their lamps, and were ſealed by his ſpirit to the day of redemption, theſe having on the wedding garment of an imputed righteouſneſs, and a new nature, "went in with him to the marriage."

But who can expreſs the tranſports that theſe wiſe virgins felt, when they were thus admitted, in holy triumph, into the preſence and full enjoyment of him, whom their ſouls hungred and thirſted after! No doubt they had taſted of his love, and by faith had often fed on him in their hearts, when ſitting down to commemorate his laſt ſupper here on earth; but how full may we think their hearts and tongues were of his praiſes, when they ſee themſelves ſeated together to eat bread in his heavenly kingdom. And what was beſt of all, "the door was ſhut," and ſhut them in, to enjoy the ever bleſſed GOD, and the company of angels and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, without interruption for evermore. I ſay, without interruption; for in this life, their eyes often guſhed out with water, becauſe men kept not GOD's law; and they could never come to appear before the LORD, or to hear his word, but Satan and his emiſſaries would come alſo to diſturb them; but now "the door is ſhut," now there is a perfect communion of ſaints, which they in vain longed for in this lower world; now tares no longer grow up with the wheat; not one ſingle hypocrite or unbeliever can ſcreen himſelf amongſt them. "Now the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and now their weary ſouls enjoy an everlaſting reſt."

Once more, O believers, let me exhort you in patience to poſſeſs your ſouls. GOD, if he has freely juſtified you by faith in his ſon, and given you his ſpirit, has ſealed you to be his; and has ſecured you, as ſurely as he ſecured *Noah*, when he locked him in the ark. But though heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST, and neither men nor devils can pluck you out of your heavenly Father's hands, yet you muſt be toſſed about with manifold temptations; however, lift up your heads, the day of your perfect, compleat redemption draweth nigh. Behold the bridegroom cometh to take you

to himſelf, the door ſhall be ſhut, and you ſhall be for ever with the LORD.

But I even tremble to tell you, O nominal chriſtians, that the door will be ſhut, I mean the door of mercy, never, never to be opened to give you admiſſion, though you ſhould continue knocking to all eternity. For thus ſpeaks our LORD, v. 11. "Afterwards," after thoſe that were ready went in, and the door was ſhut; after they had, to their ſorrow, found that no oil was to be bought, no grace to be procured, "came alſo the other virgins;" and as *Eſau*, after *Jacob* had gotten the bleſſing, cried with an exceeding bitter cry, "Bleſs me, even me alſo, O my father;" ſo they came ſaying, "LORD, LORD, open to us." Obſerve the importunity of theſe fooliſh virgins, implied in the words, "LORD, LORD." Whilſt in the body, I ſuppoſe they only read, did not pray over their prayers. If you now tell them, they ſhould "pray without ceaſing," they ſhould pray from their hearts, and feel the want of what they prayed for; they would anſwer, they could not tell what you mean by inward feelings; that GOD did not require us to be always on our knees, but if a man did juſtly, and loved mercy, and did as the church forms required him, it was as much as the LORD required at his hands.

I fear, ſirs, too many among us are of this mind: nay, I fear there are many ſo polite, ſo void of the love of GOD, as to think it too great a piece of ſelf-denial, to riſe early to offer up a ſacrifice of praiſe and thankſgiving acceptable to GOD through JESUS CHRIST. If any ſuch, by the good providence of GOD, are brought hither this morning, I beſeech you to conſider your ways, and remember, if you are not awakened out of your ſpiritual lethargy, and live a life of prayer here, you ſhall but in vain cry out with the fooliſh virgins, "LORD, LORD, open unto us," hereafter. Obſerve farther, the impudence, as well as importunity of theſe other virgins; "LORD, LORD," ſay they, as though they were intimately acquainted with the holy JESUS. Like numbers among us, who becauſe they go to church, repeat their creeds, and receive the bleſſed ſacrament, think they have a right to call JESUS their Saviour, and dare call GOD their Father, when they put up the LORD's prayer. But JESUS is

not

not your Saviour. The devil, not GOD, is your father, unleſs your hearts are purified by faith, and you are born again from above. It is not merely being baptized by water, but being born again of the Holy Ghoſt that muſt qualify you for ſalvation; and it will do you no ſervice at the great day, to ſay unto CHRIST, LORD, my name is in the regiſter of ſuch and ſuch a pariſh. I am perſuaded, the fooliſh virgins could ſay this and more; but what anſwer did JESUS make? He anſwered and ſaid, ver. 12. "Verily, I ſay unto you:" He puts the word VERILY, to aſſure them he was in earneſt. "I ſay unto you," I who am truth itſelf, I whom you have owned in words, but in works denied, "verily, I ſay unto you, I know you not." Theſe words muſt not be underſtood literally; for whatever Arians and Socinians may ſay to the contrary, yet we affirm, that JESUS CHRIST is GOD, GOD bleſſed for ever, and therefore knoweth all things. He ſaw *Nathaniel*, when under the fig-tree: he ſees, and is now looking down from heaven, his dwelling-place, upon us, to ſee how we behave in theſe fields. Brethren, I know nothing of the thoughts and intents of your hearts, in coming hither; but JESUS CHRIST knows who come like new-born babes, deſirous to be fed with the ſincere milk of the word; and he knows who came to hear what the babler ſays, and to run away with part of a broken ſentence, that they may have whereof to accuſe him. This expreſſion then, "I know you not," muſt not be underſtood literally; no, it implies a knowledge of approbation, as though CHRIST had ſaid, "You call me, LORD, LORD, but you have not done the things that I have ſaid; you deſire me to open the door, but how can you come in hither not having on a wedding garment? Alas, you are naked! Where is my outward righteouſneſs imputed to you? Where is my inherent righteouſneſs wrought in you? Where is my divine image ſtamped upon your ſouls? How dare you call me LORD, LORD, when you have not received the Holy Ghoſt, whereby I ſeal all that are truly mine? "Verily, I know you not; depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

And now, he that hath ears to hear, let him hear what manner of perſons theſe were, whom JESUS CHRIST diſmiſſed with this anſwer. Remember, I entreat you, remember they

are

not ſent away for being fornicators, ſwearers. ſabbath-kers, or prodigals. No, in all probability, as I obſerved re, they were, touching the outward obſervances of the al law, blameleſs; they were conſtant as to the form of ;ion; and if they did no good, yet no one could ſay, they any one any harm. The only thing for which they were lemned, and eternally baniſhed from the preſence of the D, (for ſo much is implied in "I know you not") was they had no oil in their lamps, no principle of a true ıg faith and holineſs in their hearts. And if perſons may o church, receive the ſacrament, lead honeſt moral lives, yet be ſent to hell at the laſt day, as they certainly will they advance no farther, Where wilt thou, O drunkard? ere wilt thou, O ſwearer? Where wilt thou, O ſabbath-ker? Where wilt thou that denieſt divine revelation, and the form of godlineſs? Where will you, and ſuch-like ers appear? I know very well. You muſt appear before dreadful tribunal of JESUS CHRIST: however you may, *Felix*, put off the proſecution of your convictions, yet as well as others, muſt ariſe after death, and appear in ment; you will then find, to your eternal ſorrow, what ſt hinted at in the beginning of this diſcourſe, that your nation ſlumbereth not: ſin has blinded your hearts, and ened your foreheads now, but yet a little while, and our D will eaſe him of his adverſaries. Methinks, by faith, the heavens opened, and the holy JESUS coming, with ace brighter than ten thouſand ſuns, darting fury upon from his eyes! Methinks I ſee you riſing from your es, trembling and aſtoniſhed, and crying out, who can e this day of his coming!

nd now what inference ſhall I draw from what has been ered? Our LORD, in the words of the text, has drawn for me; "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Watch;" that is, be upon your guard, and keep your es in continual exerciſe: For as when we are commanded atch unto prayer, it ſignifies that we ſhould continue in-t in that duty; ſo when we are required to watch in ge-l, it means that we ſhould put on the whole armour of , and live every day as though it was our laſt. And O! that

that the LORD may now enable me to lift up my voice like a trumpet! For had I a thouſand tongues, or could I ſpeak ſo loud that the whole world might hear me, I could not ſound a more uſeful alarm than that which is contained in the text. WATCH therefore, my brethren, I beſeech you by the mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, watch; be upon your guard; awake, ye that ſleep in the duſt: for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. Perhaps to-day, perhaps this midnight, the cry may be made: "for in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the trump is to ſound." However, ſuppoſing the final day of judgment may yet be a great way off, the day of death is certainly near at hand: for what is our life? "It is but a vapour," but a ſpan long, ſoon paſſeth it away, and we are gone. Bleſſed be GOD, we are all here well; but who, out of this great multitude, dares ſay, I ſhall go home to my houſe in ſafety? Who knows, but whilſt I am ſpeaking, GOD may commiſſion his miniſtring ſpirits immediately to call ſome of you away by a ſudden ſtroke, to give an account with what attention you have heard this ſermon. You know, my brethren, ſome ſuch inſtances we have lately had. And what angel or ſpirit hath aſſured us, that ſome of you ſhall not be the next? "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man will come:" And it is chiefly for this reaſon, that GOD has hidden the day of our deaths from us. For ſince I know not but I may die to-morrow, why, O my ſoul, may each of us ſay, wilt thou not watch to day? Since I know not but I may die the next moment, why wilt thou not prepare for dying this? Many ſuch reflections as theſe, my brethren, croud in upon my mind. At preſent, bleſſed be the LORD, who delights to magnify his ſtrength in a poor worm's weakneſs, I am at a ſtand, not ſo much about what I ſhall ſay, as what I ſhall leave unſaid. My belly, like *Elihu*'s, is, as it were, full of new wines; "out of the abundance of my heart my mouth ſpeaketh." The ſeeing ſo great a multitude ſtanding before me; a ſenſe of the infinite majeſty of that GOD in whoſe name I preach, and before whom I as well as you muſt appear, to give an account; and the uncertainty there is whether I ſhall live another day, to ſpeak to you any more: theſe conſiderations, eſpecially

the

the preſence of GOD, which I now feel upon my ſoul, furniſhes me with ſo much matter, that I ſcarce know where to begin, or where to end my application. However, for method-ſake, by the divine aſſiſtance, I will branch it into three particulars.

And *firſt*, I would remind you that are notoriouſly ungodly, of what our LORD ſays in the text: For though I have ſaid that your damnation ſlumbereth not, whilſt you continue in an impenitent ſtate; yet that was only to ſet you upon your watch, to convince you of your danger, and excite you to cry out, "What ſhall we do to be ſaved?" I appeal to all that hear me, whether I have ſaid, the door of mercy ſhould be ſhut againſt you, if you believe on JESUS CHRIST: No, if you are the chief of ſinners; if you are murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers; if you are emphatically the dung and offſcouring of all things; yet if you believe on JESUS CHRIST, and cry unto him with the ſame faith as the expiring thief, "LORD, remember me, now thou art in thy kingdom;" I will pawn my eternal ſalvation upon it, if he does not ſhortly tranſlate you to his heavenly paradiſe. Wonder not at my ſpeaking with ſo much aſſurance: For I know "it is a faithful and true ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that JESUS CHRIST came into the world to ſave (all truly affected and believing) ſinners: Nay, ſo great is his love, that I am perſuaded, was it neceſſary, he would come again into the world, and die a ſecond time for them on the croſs. But, bleſſed be GOD, when our LORD bowed down his head, and gave up the ghoſt, our redemption was finiſhed. It is not our ſins, but our want of a lively faith in his blood, that will prove our condemnation: if you draw near to him by faith, though ye are the worſt of ſinners, yet he will not ſay unto you, "Verily I know you not." No, a door of mercy ſhall be opened to you. Look then, look then, by an eye of faith, to that GOD-man whom ye have pierced. Behold him bleeding, panting, dying upon the croſs, with arms ſtretched out ready to embrace you all. Hark! how he groans! See how all nature is in an agony! The rocks rend, the graves open; the ſun withdraws its light, aſhamed as it were to ſee the GOD of nature ſuffer; and all this to uſher in man's great redemption. Nay, the Holy JESUS, in the very agonies and pangs

of death, prays for his very murderers; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If then you have crucified the Son of GOD afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame, yet do not deſpair, only believe, and even this ſhall be forgiven. You have read, at leaſt you have heard, no doubt, how three thouſand were converted at St. *Peter*'s preaching one ſingle ſermon, after our LORD's aſcenſion into heaven; and many of the crucifiers of the LORD of glory undoubtedly were amongſt them; and why ſhould you deſpair? For "JESUS CHRIST is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever." The Holy Ghoſt ſhall be ſent down on you, as well as on them, if you do but believe; for CHRIST aſcended up on high to receive this gift even for the vileſt of men. Come then, all ye that are weary and heavy laden with the ſenſe of your ſins, lay hold on CHRIST by faith, and he will give you reſt; for ſalvation is the free gift of GOD to all them that believe. And though you may think this too good news to be true, yet I ſpeak the truth in CHRIST, I lie not, this is the goſpel, this is the glad tidings which we are commiſſioned to preach to every creature. Be not faithleſs then, but believing. Let not the devil lead you captive at his will any longer; for all the wages he gives his ſervants is death, death often in this life, death everlaſting in the next: But the free gift of GOD, is eternal life to all that believe in JESUS CHRIST. Phariſees are and will be offended at my coming here, and offering you ſalvation on ſuch cheap terms; but the more they bid me hold my peace, the more will I cry out and proclaim to convicted ſinners, that JESUS, *David*'s Son according to the fleſh, but *David*'s Lord as he was GOD, will have mercy upon all that by a living faith truly turn to him. If this is to be vile, I pray GOD, I may be more vile. If they will not let me preach CHRIST crucified, and offer ſalvation to poor ſinners in a church, I will preach him in the lanes, ſtreets, highways and hedges; and nothing pleaſes me better, than to think I am now in one of the devils ſtrongeſt holds. Surely, the LORD has not ſent me and all you hither for nothing; no, bleſſed be GOD, the fields are white ready unto harveſt, and many ſouls I hope will be gathered into his heavenly garner. It is true, it is the midnight of the church, eſpecially the poor church of *England*; but GOD has lately ſent forth his ſervants

to cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh:" I beſeech you, O ſinners, hearken unto the voice! Let me eſpouſe you by faith to my dear maſter; and henceforward "watch and pray," that you may be ready to go forth to meet him.

Secondly, I would apply myſelf to thoſe amongſt you, that are not openly profane, but by depending on a formal round of duties, deceive your own ſouls, and are only fooliſh virgins. But I muſt ſpeak to your conviction, rather than your comfort. My dear brethren, do not deceive your own ſouls. You have heard how far the fooliſh virgins went, and yet were anſwered with "Verily I know you not:" The reaſon is, becauſe none but ſuch who have a living faith in JESUS CHRIST, and are truly born again, can poſſibly enter into the kingdom of heaven. You may, perhaps, live honeſt and outwardly moral lives, but if you depend on that morality, or join your works with your faith, in order to juſtify you before GOD, you have no lot or ſhare in CHRIST's redemption: For what is this but to deny the LORD that has bought you? What is this but making yourſelves your own Saviours? taking the crown from JESUS CHRIST, and putting it on your own heads? The crime of the devil, ſome have ſuppoſed, conſiſted in this, that he would not bow to JESUS CHRIST, when the Father commanded all the angels to worſhip him; and what do you leſs? You will not own and ſubmit to his righteouſneſs; and though you pretend to worſhip him with your lips, yet your hearts are far from him; beſides you, in effect, deny the operations of his bleſſed ſpirit, you miſtake common for effectual grace; you hope to be ſaved, becauſe you have good deſires, and a few ſhort convictions; and what is this, but to give GOD, his word, and all his ſaints, the lie? A *Jew*, a *Turk*, has equally as good grounds whereon to build his hopes of ſalvation. Need I not then to cry out to you, ye fooliſh virgins, watch. Beg of GOD to convince you of your ſelf-righteouſneſs, and the ſecret unbelief of your hearts; or otherwiſe, whenſoever the cry ſhall be made, "Behold the bridegroom cometh," you will find yourſelves utterly unprepared to go forth to meet him: You may cry "Lord, Lord;" but the anſwer will be, "Verily, I know you not."

Thirdly, I would ſpeak a word or two by way of exhortation to thoſe who are wiſe virgins, and are aſſured that they have on a wedding-garment. That there are many ſuch amongſt you, who by grace have renounced your own righteouſneſs, and know that the righteouſneſs of the LORD JESUS is imputed to you, I make no doubt. GOD has his ſecret ones in the worſt of times; and I am perſuaded he has not let ſo loud a goſpel cry to be made amongſt his people, as of late has been heard, for nothing. No, I am confident, the Holy Ghoſt has been given to many at the preaching of faith, and has powerfully fallen upon many, whilſt they have been hearing the word. You are now then no longer fooliſh, but wiſe virgins; notwithſtanding, I beſeech you alſo to ſuffer the word of exhortation; for wiſe virgins are too apt, whilſt the bridegroom tarries, to ſlumber and ſleep. Watch therefore, my dear brethren, watch and pray, at this time eſpecially; for perhaps a time of ſuffering is at hand. The ark of the LORD begins already to be driven into the wilderneſs. Be ye therefore upon your watch, and ſtill perſevere in following your LORD, even without the camp, bearing his reproach: the cry that has been lately made, has awakened the devil and his ſervants; they begin to rage horribly; and well they may; for I hope their kingdom is in danger. Watch therefore, for if we are not always upon our guard, a time of trial may overtake us unawares; and, inſtead of owning, like *Peter* we may be tempted to deny our maſter. Set death and eternity often before you. Look unto JESUS, the author and finiſher of your faith, and conſider how little a while it will be, ere he comes to judgment; and then our reproach ſhall be wiped away; the accuſers of us and our brethren ſhall be caſt down, and we all ſhall be lodged in heaven for ever, with our dear LORD JESUS.

Laſtly; what I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, watch: high and low, rich and poor, young and old, one with another, I beſeech you, by the mercies of JESUS, to be upon your guard: fly, fly to JESUS CHRIST, that heavenly bridegroom: behold he deſires to take you to himſelf, miſerable, poor, blind and naked as you are; he is willing to cloath you with his everlaſting righteouſneſs, and make you partakers of that glory, which he enjoyed with the Father before the world began.

gan. Do not turn a deaf ear to me; do not reject the meſ-
ge on account of the meanneſs of the meſſenger. I am a
ild; but the LORD has choſen me, that the glory might be
his own. Had he ſent to invite you by a learned rabbi,
u might have been tempted to think the man had done
mething; but now GOD has ſent a child, that the excel-
ncy of the power may be ſeen not to be of man, but of GOD.
et the learned Phariſees then deſpiſe my youth: I care not
w vile I appear in the ſight of ſuch men; I glory in it.
nd I am perſuaded, if any of you ſhould be married to
HRIST by this preaching, you will have no reaſon to repent,
hen you come to heaven, that GOD ſent a child to cry,
Behold the bridegroom cometh!" O! my brethren, the
ought of being inſtrumental in bringing one of you to glory,
ls me with freſh zeal. Once more I entreat you, "Watch,
atch and pray:" For the LORD JESUS will receive all that
ll upon him faithfully. Let that cry, "Behold the bride-
oom cometh," be continually ſounding in your ears; and
gin now to live, as though you were aſſured, this night you
ere to "go forth to meet him." I could ſay more, but
e other buſineſs and duties of the day oblige me to ſtop. May
e LORD give you all an hearing ear, and obedient heart, and
cloſely unite you to himſelf by one ſpirit, that when he
all come in terrible majeſty, to judge mankind, you may be
und having on a wedding garment, and ready to go in with
m to the marriage.

Grant this, O LORD, for thy dear Son's ſake!

SERMON XXVI.

The Eternity of Hell-Torments.

To the INHABITANTS of SAVANNAH in GEORGIA.

My dear Friends,

THOUGH the following ſermon has been preached elſewhere, yet as the occaſion of my preaching it among you was particular, as you ſeemed to give an uncommon attention to it in public, and afterwards expreſſed your ſatisfaction in it to me, when I came to viſit you in your own houſes, I thought proper to offer it to you.

And here I cannot but bleſs GOD for the general diſlike of heretical principles that I have found among you; as alſo for your zeal and approbation of my conduct, when the glory of GOD and your welfare, have obliged me to reſent and publicly declare againſt the antichriſtian tenets of ſome lately under my charge.

I need only exhort you to beg of GOD to give you a true faith, and to add to your faith virtue, that you may adorn the goſpel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST in all things.

Your conſtant daily attendance upon public worſhip, the gladneſs wherewith you have received me into your houſes, the mildneſs wherewith you have ſubmitted to my reproofs, more eſpecially the great (though unmerited) concern you ſhewed at my departure, induce me to hope this will be your endeavour.

How long GOD of his good providence will keep me from you, I know not. However, you may aſſure yourſelves I will return according to my promiſe, as ſoon as I have received

ceived impoſition of hands, and compleated the other buſineſs that called me hither.

In the mean while, accept of this, as a pledge of the undiſſembled love of

Your affectionate though unworthy paſtor,

London,
1738.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

MATTHEW XXV. 46.

Theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment.

THE excellency of the goſpel diſpenſation, is greatly evidenced by thoſe ſanctions of rewards and puniſhments, which it offers to the choice of all its hearers, in order to engage them to be obedient to its precepts. For it promiſes no leſs than eternal happineſs to the good, and denounces no ſlighter a puniſhment than everlaſting miſery againſt the wicked: On the one hand, "It is a ſavour of life unto life," on the other, "A ſavour of death unto death." And though one would imagine, the bare mentioning of the former would be ſufficient to draw men to their duty, yet miniſters in all ages have found it neceſſary, frequently to remind their people of the latter, and to ſet before them the terrors of the LORD, as ſo many powerful diſſuaſives from ſin.

But whence is it that men are ſo diſingenuous? The reaſon ſeems to be this: The promiſe of eternal happineſs is ſo agreeable to the inclinations and wiſhes of mankind, that all who call themſelves chriſtians, univerſally and willingly ſubſcribe to the belief of it: but then there is ſomething ſo ſhocking in the conſideration of eternal torments, and ſeemingly ſuch an infinite diſproportion between an endleſs duration of pain, and a ſhort life ſpent in pleaſure, that men (ſome at leaſt of them) can ſcarcely be brought to confeſs it as an article of their faith, that an eternity of miſery awaits the wicked in a future ſtate.

I ſhall

I ſhall therefore at this time, beg leave to inſiſt on the proof of this part of one of the Articles of our Creed; and endeavour to make good what our bleſſed LORD has here threatened in the words of the text, "Theſe (that is, the wicked) ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment."

Accordingly, without conſidering the words as they ſtand in relation to the context, I ſhall reſolve all I have to ſay, into this one general propoſition, "That the torments reſerved for the wicked hereafter, are eternal."

But before I proceed to make good this, I muſt inform you that I take it for granted,

All preſent do ſtedfaſtly believe, They have ſomething within them, which we call a ſoul, and which is capable of ſurviving the diſſolution of the body, and of being miſerable or happy to all eternity.

I take it for granted farther, That you believe a divine revelation; that thoſe books, emphatically called the Scriptures, were written by the inſpiration of GOD, and that the things therein contained, are founded upon eternal truth.

I take it for granted, That you believe, that the Son of GOD came down to die for ſinners; and that there is but one Mediator between GOD and man, even the man CHRIST JESUS.

Theſe things being granted, (and they were neceſſary to be premiſed) proceed we now to make good the one general propoſition aſſerted in the text, That the torments reſerved for the wicked hereafter are eternal. "Theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment." The

Firſt argument I ſhall advance to prove that the torments reſerved for the wicked hereafter, are eternal, is, That the word of GOD himſelf aſſures us, in line upon line, that it will be ſo.

To quote all the texts that might be produced in proof of this, would be endleſs. Let it ſuffice to inſtance only in a few. In the Old Teſtament, in the book of *Daniel*, chap. xii. ver. 2. we are told, that "ſome ſhall awake to everlaſting life, and others to everlaſting contempt." In the book of *Iſaiah*, it is ſaid, that "the worm of thoſe that have tranſgreſſed GOD's law, and die impenitently, ſhall not die, nor their fire be quenched." And in another place, the holy Prophet,

Prophet, ſtruck, no doubt, with aſtoniſhment and horror at the proſpect of the continuance of the torments of the damned, breaks out into this moving expoſtulation, "Who can dwell with everlaſting burnings?"

The New Teſtament is ſtill fuller as to this point, it being a revelation which brought this and ſuch-like particulars to a clear light. The Apoſtle *Jude* tells us of the profane deſpiſers of dignities in his days, that "for them was reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever." And in the book of the *Revelations*, it is written, that "the ſmoke of the torments of the wicked aſcendeth for ever and ever." And if we believe the witneſs of men inſpired, the witneſs of the Son of GOD, who had the Spirit given him, as Mediator, without meaſure, is ſtill far greater: and in St. *Mark*'s goſpel, He repeats this ſolemn declaration three ſeveral times, "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed;" that is, it is better to forego the gratification of thy luſt, or incur the diſpleaſure of a friend, which may be as dear to thee as a hand, or as uſeful as a foot, "than having two hands and feet, (that is, for indulging the one, or diſobeying GOD to oblige the other) to be caſt into hell, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

And here again, in the words of the text, "Theſe (the wicked) ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment."

I know it has been objected by ſome who have denied the eternity of hell-torments, That the words *everlaſting* and *ever and ever*, are often uſed in the Holy Scriptures, (eſpecially in the Old Teſtament) when they ſignify not an endleſs duration, but a limited term of time.

And this we readily grant: but then we reply, That when the words are uſed with this limitation, they either manifeſtly appear to be uſed ſo from the context; or are put in oppoſition to occaſional types which GOD gave his people on ſome ſpecial occaſions, as when it is ſaid, "It ſhall be a perpetual or everlaſting ſtatute," or, "a ſtatute for ever;" that is, a ſtanding type, and not merely tranſient or occaſional, as was the pillar of cloud, the manna, and ſuch-like. Or, laſtly, they have a relation to that covenant, GOD made with his ſpiritually *Iſrael*; which, if underſtood in a ſpiritual ſenſe,

will

will be everlaſting, though the ceremonial diſpenſation be aboliſhed.

Beſides, it ought to be obſerved, that ſome of the paſſages juſt now referred to, have neither of theſe words ſo much as mentioned in them, and cannot poſſibly be interpreted, ſo as to denote only a limited term of years.

But let that be as it will, it is evident even to a demonſtration, that the words of the text will not admit of ſuch a reſtrained ſignification, as appears from their being directly oppoſed to the words immediately following, "That the righteous ſhall go into life eternal." From which words, all are ready to grant, that the life promiſed to the righteous will be eternal. And why the puniſhment threatened to the wicked ſhould not be underſtood to be eternal likewiſe, when the very ſame word in the original, is uſed to expreſs the duration of each, no ſhadow of a reaſon can be given.

But, *Secondly*, There cannot be one argument urged, why GOD ſhould reward his ſaints with everlaſting happineſs, which will not equally prove that he ought to puniſh ſinners with eternal miſery.

For, ſince we know nothing (at leaſt for a certainty) how he will deal with either, but by a Divine Revelation; and ſince, as was proved by the foregoing argument, he hath as poſitively threatened eternally to puniſh the wicked, as to reward the good; it follows, that his truth will be as much impeached and called in queſtion, did he not inflict his puniſhments, as it would be, if he did not confer his rewards.

To this alſo it has been objected, That though GOD is obliged by promiſe to give his rewards, yet his veracity could not be called in queſtion, ſuppoſing he ſhould not execute his threatenings, as he actually did not in the caſe of *Nineveh*; which GOD expreſsly declared by his Prophet *Jonah*, "ſhould be deſtroyed in forty days:" notwithſtanding the ſequel of the ſtory informs us, that *Nineveh* was ſpared.

But in anſwer to this objection we affirm, that GOD's threatenings, as well as promiſes, are without repentance; and for this reaſon, becauſe they are both founded on the eternal laws of right reaſon. Accordingly we always find, that where the conditions were not performed, on the non-performance of which the threatenings were denounced, GOD always

always executed the puniſhment threatened. The driving *Adam* out of *Eden*, the deſtruction of the old world by a deluge of water, and the overthrow of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, are, and will be always ſo many ſtanding monuments of GOD's executing his threatenings when denounced, though to our weak apprehenſions, the puniſhment may ſeem far to exceed the crime.

It is true, GOD did ſpare *Nineveh*, and that becauſe the inhabitants did actually repent, and therefore performed the conditions upon which it was ſuppoſed, by the Prophet's being ſent to warn them, the threatened puniſhment ſhould be withheld.

And ſo in reſpect to goſpel threatenings. If men will ſo far conſult their own welfare, as to comply with the goſpel, GOD certainly will not puniſh them, but on the contrary, confer upon them his rewards. But to affirm that he will not puniſh, and that eternally too, impenitent, obſtinate ſinners, according as he hath threatened; what is it, in effect, but to make GOD like a man, that he ſhould lie, or the ſon of man, that he ſhould repent?

But the abſurdity of ſuch an opinion will appear ſtill more evident from

The *Third* argument I ſhall offer to prove, that the torments reſerved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, From the nature of the chriſtian covenant.

And here I muſt again obſerve, that it was taken for granted at the beginning of this diſcourſe, that you believe the Son of GOD came down to ſave ſinners; and that there is but one Mediator between GOD and man, even the man CHRIST JESUS.

And here I take it for granted farther, (unleſs you believe the abſurd and unwarrantable doctrine of purgatory) that you are fully perſuaded, this life is the only time allotted by Almighty GOD for working out our ſalvation, and that after a few years are paſſed over, there will remain no more ſacrifice for ſin.

And if this be granted (and who dares deny it?) it follows, that if a wicked man dieth in his wickedneſs, and under the wrath of GOD, he muſt continue in that ſtate to all eternity.

For, ſince there is no poſſibility of their being delivered out of ſuch a condition, but by and through CHRIST; and ſince, at the hour of death, the time of CHRIST's mediation and interceſſion for him is irrecoverably gone; the ſame reaſon that may be given, why GOD ſhould puniſh a ſinner that dieth under the guilt of his ſins for a ſingle day, will equally hold good, why he ſhould continue to puniſh him for a year, an age, nay to all eternity.

But I haſten to the *Fourth* and laſt argument, to prove, That the torments reſerved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, Becauſe the devil's puniſhment is to be ſo.

That there is ſuch a being whom we call the devil; that he was once an angel of light, but for his pride and rebellion againſt GOD, was caſt down from heaven, and is now permitted, with the reſt of the ſpiritual wickedneſſes, to walk to and fro, ſeeking whom they may devour; that there is a place of torment reſerved for them, or, to uſe the Apoſtle's words, "That they are reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs unto the judgment of the great day;" are truths all here preſent were ſuppoſed to be convinced of, at the beginning of this diſcourſe, you believing the Holy Scriptures to be written by the inſpiration of GOD, wherein theſe truths are delivered.

But then if we allow all this, and think it no injuſtice in GOD to puniſh thoſe once glorious ſpirits for their rebellion; how can we think it unjuſt in him, to puniſh wicked men for their impenitency to all eternity?

You will ſay, perhaps, that they have ſinned againſt greater light, and therefore deſerve a greater puniſhment. And ſo we grant that the puniſhment of the fallen angels may be greater as to degree, than that of wicked men; but then we affirm, it will be equal as to the eternal duration of it: for in that day, as the lively oracles of GOD inform us, ſhall the Son of Man ſay to them on his left hand, "Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Where we find that impenitent ſinners are to be caſt into the ſame everlaſting fire, with the devil and his angels; and that too very juſtly. For though they may have ſinned againſt greater light, yet chriſtians ſin againſt greater mercy. Since CHRIST took not hold of, did not die for, the

fallen angels, but for men and for our ſalvation. So that if GOD ſpared not thoſe excellent beings, aſſure thyſelf, O obſtinate ſinner, whoever thou art, he will by no means ſpare thee.

From what then has been ſaid it plainly appears, that verily the torments reſerved for the wicked hereafter, are eternal. And if ſo, brethren, how ought we to fly to JESUS CHRIST for refuge; how holy ought we to be in all manner of converſation and godlineſs, that we may be accounted worthy to eſcape this wrath to come!

But before I proceed to a practical exhortation, permit me to draw an inference or two from what has been ſaid.

And *Firſt*, If the torments reſerved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, what ſhall we ſay to thoſe, who make an open profeſſion in their creed to believe a life everlaſting, a life of miſery as well as happineſs, and yet dare to live in the actual commiſſion of thoſe ſins which will unavoidably, without repentance, bring them into that place of torment? Thou believeſt that the puniſhments of the impenitently wicked in another life, are eternal: "Thou doſt well, the devils alſo believe and tremble." But know, O vain man, unleſs this belief doth influence thy practice, and makes thee bid adieu to thy ſins, every time thou repeateſt thy creed, thou doeſt in effect ſay, I believe I ſhall be undone for ever.

But, *Secondly*, If the torments reſerved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, then let this ſerve as a caution to ſuch perſons, (and it is to be feared there are ſome ſuch) who go about to diſſuade others from the belief of ſuch an important truth: There being no ſurer way, in all probability, to encourage and promote infidelity and prophaneneſs, than the broaching or maintaining ſo unwarrantable a doctrine. For if the poſitive threats of GOD concerning the eternity of hell-torments, are already found inſufficient to deter men from ſin, what a higher pitch of wickedneſs may we imagine they will quickly arrive at, when they are taught to entertain any hopes of a future recovery out of them; or, what is ſtill worſe, that their ſoule are hereafter to be annihilated, and become like the beaſts that periſh? But wo unto ſuch blind leaders of the blind. No wonder if they both fall into the ditch. And let

ſuch

ſuch corrupters of God's word know, that I teſtify unto every man that heareth me this day, "That if any one ſhall add unto, or take away from the words that are written in the book of God, God ſhall take his part out of the book of life, and ſhall add unto him all the plagues that are in that book."

Thirdly and *Laſtly*, If the torments reſerved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, then this may ſerve as a reproof for thoſe who quarrel with God, and ſay it is inconſiſtent with his juſtice, to puniſh a perſon to all eternity, only for enjoying the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon. But ſuch perſons muſt be told, that it is not their thinking or calling God unjuſt, will make him ſo, no more than a condemned priſoner's ſaying the law or judge is unjuſt, will render either duly chargeable with ſuch an imputation. But knoweſt thou, O worm, what blaſphemy thou art guilty of, in charging God with injuſtice? "Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, why haſt thou made me thus?" Wilt thou preſume to arraign the Almighty at the bar of thy ſhallow reaſoning? and call him unjuſt, for puniſhing thee eternally, only becauſe thou wiſheſt it may not be ſo? But hath God ſaid it, and ſhall he not do it? He hath ſaid it: and let God be true, though every man be a liar. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Aſſuredly he will. And if ſinners will not own his juſtice in his threatenings here, they will be compelled ere long to own and feel them, when tormented by him hereafter.

But to come to a more practical application of what has been delivered.

You have heard, brethren, the eternity of hell-torments plainly proved, from the expreſs declarations of holy ſcriptures, and conſequences naturally drawn from them. And now there ſeems to need no great art of rhetoric to perſuade any underſtanding perſon to avoid and abhor thoſe ſins, which without repentance will certainly plunge him into this eternal gulph. The diſproportion between the pleaſure and the pain (if there be any pleaſure in ſin) is ſo infinitely great, that ſuppoſing it was only poſſible, though not certain, that the wicked would be everlaſtingly puniſhed, no one that has the reaſon of a man, for the enjoying a little momentary pleaſure, would,

would, one might imagine, run the hazard of enduring eternal pain. But ſince the torments of the damned are not only poſſible, but certain, (ſince GOD himſelf, who cannot lie, has told us ſo) for men, notwithſtanding, to perſiſt in their diſobedience, and then flatter themſelves, that GOD will not make good his threatenings, is a moſt egregious inſtance of folly and preſumption.

Dives himſelf ſuppoſed, that if one roſe from the dead, his brethren would amend their lives; but Chriſtians, it ſeems, will not repent, though the Son of GOD died and roſe again, and told them what they muſt expect, if they continue obſtinate in evil-doing.

Would we now and then draw off our thoughts from ſenſible objects, and by faith meditate a while on the miſeries of the damned, I doubt not but we ſhould, as it were, hear many an unhappy ſoul venting his fruitleſs ſorrows, in ſome ſuch piteous moans as theſe.

"O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death!" O fooliſh mortal that I was, thus to bring myſelf into theſe never-ceaſing tortures, for the tranſitory enjoyment of a few ſhort-lived pleaſures, which ſcarcely afforded me any ſatisfaction, even when I moſt indulged myſelf in them. Alas! are theſe the wages, theſe the effects of ſin? Are all the grand deceiver's inviting promiſes come to this? O damned apoſtate! Firſt to delude me with pretended promiſes of happineſs, and after ſeveral years drudgery in his ſervice, thus to involve me in eternal woe. O that I had never hearkened to his beguiling inſinuations! O that I had rejected his very firſt ſuggeſtions with the utmoſt deteſtation and abhorrence! O that I had taken up my croſs and followed CHRIST! O that I had never ridiculed ſerious godlineſs; and out of a falſe politeneſs, condemned the truly pious as too ſevere, enthuſiaſtic, or ſuperſtitious! For I then had been happy indeed, happy beyond expreſſion, happy to all eternity, yonder in thoſe bleſſed regions where they ſit, cloathed with unſpeakable glory, and chanting forth their ſeraphic hallelujahs to the Lamb that ſitteth upon the throne for ever. But, alas! theſe reflections come now too late: theſe wiſhes now are vain and fruitleſs. I have not ſuffered, and therefore muſt not reign with them. I have in effect denied

the LORD that bought me, and therefore juſtly am I now denied by him. But muſt I live for ever tormented in theſe flames? Muſt this body of mine, which not long ſince lay in ſtate, was cloathed in purple and fine linen, and fared ſumptuouſly every day, muſt it be here eternally confined, and made the mockery of inſulting devils? O eternity! that thought fills me with deſpair: I muſt be miſerable for ever."

Come then, all ye ſelf-deluding, ſelf-deluded ſinners, and imagine yourſelves for once in the place of that truly wretched man I have been here deſcribing. Think, I beſeech you by the mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, think with yourſelves, how racking, how unſupportable the never-dying worm of a ſelf-condemning conſcience will hereafter be to you. Think how impoſſible it will be for you to dwell with everlaſting burnings.

Come, all ye chriſtians of a lukewarm, *Laodicean* ſpirit, ye *Gallio*'s in religion, who care a little, but not enough for the things of GOD; O think, think with yourſelves, how deplorable it will be to loſe the enjoyment of heaven, and run into endleſs torments, merely becauſe you will be content to be almoſt, and will not ſtrive to be altogether chriſtians. Conſider, I beſeech you conſider, how you will rave and curſe that fatal ſtupidity which made you believe any thing leſs than true faith in JESUS, productive of a life of ſtrict piety, ſelf-denial, and mortification, can keep you from thoſe torments, the eternity of which I have been endeavouring to prove.

But I can no more. Theſe thoughts are too melancholy for me to dwell on, as well as for you to hear; and GOD knows, as puniſhing is his ſtrange work, ſo denouncing his threatenings is mine. But if the bare mentioning the torments of the damned is ſo ſhocking, how terrible muſt the enduring of them be!

And now, are not ſome of you ready to cry out, "Theſe are hard ſayings, who can bear them?"

But let not ſincere chriſtians be in the leaſt terrified at what has been delivered: No, for you is reſerved a crown, a kingdom, an eternal and exceeding weight of glory. CHRIST never ſaid that the righteous, the believing, the upright, the ſincere, but the wicked, mercileſs, negatively good profeſſors

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before deſcribed, ſhall go into everlaſting puniſhment. For you, who love him in ſincerity, a new and living way is laid open into the Holy of Holies by the blood of JESUS CHRIST: and an abundant entrance will be adminiſtered unto you, at the great day of account, into eternal life. Take heed, therefore, and beware that there be not in any of you a root of bitterneſs ſpringing up of unbelief: but on the contrary, ſtedfaſtly and heartily rely on the many precious promiſes reached out to you in the goſpel, knowing that he who hath promiſed is faithful, and therefore will perform.

But let no obſtinately wicked profeſſors dare to apply any of the divine promiſes to themſelves: "For it is not meet to take the childrens meat and give it unto dogs:" No, to ſuch the terrors of the LORD only belong. And as certainly as CHRIST will ſay to his true followers, "Come, ye bleſſed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world;" ſo he will unalterably pronounce this dreadful ſentence againſt all that die in their ſins, "Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

From which unhappy ſtate, may GOD of his infinite mercy deliver us all through JESUS CHRIST; to whom, with thee O Father, and thee O Holy Ghoſt, three Perſons and one eternal GOD, be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all honour, power, might, majeſty, and dominion, now and for evermore.

SERMON XXVII.

Blind *Bartimeus.*

MARK X. 52.

And JESUS *ſaid unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his ſight, and followed* JESUS *in the way.*

WHEN the apoſtle *Peter* was recommending JESUS of *Nazareth*, in one of his ſermons to the *Jews*, he gave him a ſhort, but withal a glorious and exalted character, "That he went about doing good." He went about, he ſought occaſions of doing good; it was his meat and drink to do the works of him that ſent him, whilſt the day of his public adminiſtration laſted. Juſtly was he ſtiled by the prophet, the ſun of righteouſneſs. For, as the ſun in the natural firmament diffuſes his quickening and reviving beams through the univerſe, ſo, wherever this ſun of righteouſneſs, the bleſſed JESUS aroſe, he aroſe with healing under his wings. He was indeed a prophet like unto *Moſes*, and proved that he was the Meſſiah which was to come into the world, by the miracles which he wrought; though with this material difference, the miracles of *Moſes*, agreeable to the Old Teſtament diſpenſation, were miracles of judgment; the miracles of JESUS, who came to bear our ſickneſſes and heal our infirmities, were miracles of mercy, and were wrought, not only for the cure of people's bodies, but alſo for the converſion of their precious and immortal ſouls. Sometimes, one and the ſame perſon was the ſubject of both theſe mercies. A glorious proof of this, we have in the miraculous cure wrought upon a poor blind beggar, named *Bartimeus*, who is to be the ſubject of the following diſcourſe, and to whom the words of the text refer. "JESUS ſaid unto him,

Go

Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his ſight, and followed JESUS in the way."

My deſign is, *Firſt*, to make ſome obſervations on the matter of fact, as recorded by the evangeliſts. And then,

Secondly, To point out the improvement that may be made thereof. May JESUS ſo bleſs this following diſcourſe, that every ſpiritually blind hearer may receive his ſight, and, after the example of *Bartimeus*, "follow JESUS in the way!"

If we would take a view of the whole ſtory, we muſt go back to the 46th verſe of this chapter. "And they (our LORD and his diſciples, who, we find by the context, had been converſing together) came to *Jericho*," a place devoted by *Joſhua* to the curſe of GOD; and yet, even this place yields converts to JESUS; *Zaccheus* had been called there formerly; and *Bartimeus*, as we ſhall hear by-and-by, in all probability, was called now. For ſome good may come even out of *Nazareth*. CHRIST himſelf was born there, and his ſovereign grace can reach and overcome the worſt of people, in the very worſt of places. JESUS came to *Jericho*. Let not his miniſters, if providence points out their way, ſhun going to ſeemingly the moſt unlikely places to do good, ſome choſen veſſels may be therein. JESUS and his diſciples came to *Jericho*. They were *itinerants*; and, as I have frequently obſerved, ſeldom ſtayed long in a place; not that this is any argument againſt the ſtated ſettlement of particular paſtors over particular pariſhes. But however, our LORD's practice, in this reſpect, gives a kind of a ſanction to itinerant preaching, when perſons are properly called to, and qualified for, ſuch an employ. And I believe we may venture to affirm (though we would by no means preſcribe or dictate to the Holy One of *Iſrael*) that, whenever there ſhall be a general revival of religion in any country, itinerant preaching will be more in vogue. And it is to be feared, that thoſe who condemn it now, merely on account of the meanneſs of its appearances, would have joined with the ſelf-righteous Scribes and Phariſees, in condemning even the Son of GOD himſelf, for ſuch a practice.

" And as he went out of *Jericho* with his diſciples, and a great number of people;" ὄχλικανῦ a great number of mob, or rabble, as the High-prieſts of that generation termed them: for theſe were the conſtant followers of JESUS of *Nazareth*; it was the poor that received his goſpel, the common people heard him gladly, and followed him from place to place. Not that all who followed him, were his true diſciples. No, ſome followed him only for his loaves, others out of curioſity; though ſome undoubtedly followed to hear, and be edified by the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. JESUS knew this, and was alſo ſenſible how diſpleaſing this crowding after him was to ſome of the rulers of the *Jewiſh* church, who, upon every occaſion, were ready to ſay, " Have any of the Scribes and Phariſees believed on him?" But, notwithſtanding, I do not hear of our bleſſed LORD's ſending them home but once; and that was, after they had been with him three days, and had nothing left to eat, he ſaw they were as ſheep having no ſhepherd, and therefore had compaſſion on them, and taught them. A ſufficient warrant this for goſpel-miniſters to preach to poor ſouls that follow to hear the word, whatever principle their coming may proceed from. At the ſame time, they ſhould caution people againſt thinking themſelves chriſtians, becauſe they follow CHRIST's miniſters. This our LORD frequently did. For there are many that followed JESUS, and now follow his miniſters, and hear them gladly; nay, perhaps do many things, as *Herod* did, who, it is to be feared, will never follow them into the kingdom of heaven. Much people followed JESUS out of *Jericho*, but how many of them were offended in him; and afterwards, it may be, cried out, " Crucify him, crucify him." Who would depend on popularity? It is like the morning cloud, or early dew, that paſſeth away. But what a preſs, and ſeemingly continued hurry of buſineſs did the bleſſed JESUS live in! he could not be hid; go where he would, much people followed him. He had ſcarce time to eat bread. Happy is it for ſuch who are called to act in a public ſtation in the church, and to be more abundant in labours, that their JESUS has trodden in this dangerous path before them. Popularity is a fiery furnace, and no one, but he who kept the three children amidſt *Nebuchadnezzar*'s flames, can preſerve popular miniſters from being hurt

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by it. But we can do all things through CHRIST ſtrengthening us. And I have often thought, that there is one conſideration ſufficient to extinguiſh, or moderate at leaſt, any exceſs of joy and ſelf-complacence, which the moſt popular preacher may feel, when followed even by the greateſt multitudes; and that is this, "How many of theſe hearers will go "away, without receiving any ſaving benefit by my preach-"ing; nay, how many, it may be, will only have their damnation increaſed by it!" As we find many will ſay at the great day, "haſt thou not taught in our ſtreets;" to whom JESUS ſhall anſwer, "Verily, I know you not."

But to proceed, "As our LORD went out of *Jericho* with his diſciples, and a great number of people, blind *Bartimeus*, (the ſon of *Timeus*) ſat by the highway-ſide begging." It ſhould ſeem that he was a noted, though by no means what we commonly call, a ſturdy beggar; having no other way, as he had loſt his ſight, to get his bread; his caſe was ſtill the more pitiable, if he was, as ſome think the name imports, the blind ſon of a blind father. It may be, he begged for his father and himſelf too; and if ſo, then this may give us light into that paſſage of *Matthew* xx. 22. where we are told, that "two men ſpake to JESUS." It might be father and ſon, though only one is mentioned here, becauſe he only followed JESUS in the way. Thus that holy, judicious, and practical expoſitor of holy writ, Mr. *Henry*. But however this be, he is not blamed for begging, neither ſhould we diſcommend others for ſo doing, when providence calls to it. It was the unjuſt ſteward that ſaid, "To beg I am aſhamed." It is our pride that often makes us unwilling to be beholden; JESUS was not thus minded, he lived, as it were, upon alms; the women that followed him, miniſtred to him of their ſubſtance. *Bartimeus*, not being able to dig, begs for his living; and, in order to make a better trade of it, ſat by the highway-ſide, in all probability, without, or near the gate of the city, where people muſt neceſſarily paſs in and out. But though he had loſt his ſight, he had his hearing perfect; and it ſhould comfort us, if we have loſt one ſenſe, that we have the uſe of another, and that we are not deprived of the benefit of all. Happy was it for *Bartimeus* that he could hear, though not ſee. For in all probability, upon hearing the noiſe and clamour

mour of the much people that followed after our LORD, his curioſity ſet him upon enquiring into the cauſe of it, and ſome one or another told him, "that JESUS of *Nazareth* was paſſing by;" JESUS of *Nazareth*, called ſo, becauſe he was bred there, or out of contempt; *Nazareth* being either a very mean, or very wicked place, or both, which made guileleſs *Nathaniel* ſay, "Can any good come out of *Nazareth?*" And what does *Bartimeus* do when he hears of JESUS? We are told, ver. 47; "And when he heard that it was JESUS of *Nazareth*, he began to cry out." This plainly denotes, that though the eyes of his body were ſhut, yet the eyes of his mind were, in ſome degree, opened, ſo that he ſaw, perhaps, more than moſt of the multitude that followed after JESUS; for, as ſoon as he heard of him, he began to cry out; which he would not have done, had he not heard of him before, and believed alſo, that he was both able and willing to reſtore ſight to the blind. "He began to cry out." This implies, that he had a deep ſenſe of his own miſery, and the need which he had of a cure; his prayers did not freeze as they went out of his lips; he began to cry out, that JESUS might hear him, notwithſtanding the noiſe of the throng; and he began to cry out, as ſoon as he heard he was paſſing by, not knowing whether he might ever enjoy ſuch an opportunity any more. "He began to cry out, JESUS, thou Son of *David*, have mercy upon me." The people called him JESUS of *Nazareth*. *Bartimeus* ſtiles him, "JESUS, thou Son of *David*." Thereby evidencing, that he believed him to be the Meſſiah who was to come into the world, unto whom the LORD GOD was to give the throne of his father *David*, and of whoſe kingdom there was to be no end. "JESUS, thou Son of *David*;" or, as it is in the parallel place of St. *Matthew* xx. 30. "O LORD, thou ſon of *David*;" of whom it had been long foretold, *Iſaiah* xxxv. that when he ſhould come, "the eyes of the blind ſhould be opened." "Have mercy upon me," the natural language of a ſoul brought to lie down at the feet of a ſovereign GOD. Here is no laying claim to a cure by way of merit; no proud, ſelf-righteous, GOD I thank thee that I am not as other men are: no bringing in a reckoning of performances, nor any doubting of JESUS's power or willingneſs to heal him, but out of the abundance of the heart,

heart, his mouth ſpeaketh, and, in the language of the poor, broken-hearted publican, he cries out, "JESUS, thou Son of *David*, have mercy on me." JESUS, thou friend of ſinners, thou Saviour, who, though thou be the true GOD, waſt pleaſed to become the Son of *David*, and to be made man, that thou mighteſt ſeek and ſave thoſe that were loſt, have mercy upon me; let thy bowels yearn towards a poor, miſerable, blind beggar!

One would have thought that ſuch a moving petition as this would have melted the whole multitude, that heard his piteous cry, into compaſſion, and induced ſome at leaſt to turn ſuitors in his behalf, or help to carry him to the bleſſed JESUS. But inſtead of that, we are told, ver. 48, that "many charged him." The word in the original ſeems to imply a charge, attended with threatning, and ſpoken in an angry manner. They charged him "to hold his peace;" and it may be, threatned to beat him if he did not. They looked upon him beneath the notice of JESUS of *Nazareth*, and were ready enough to aſk, whether he thought JESUS CHRIST had nothing elſe to do but to wait upon him. This was, no doubt, very diſcouraging to blind *Bartimeus*. For oppoſition comes cloſeſt when it proceeds from thoſe who are eſteemed followers of the Lamb. The ſpouſe complains as of ſomething peculiarly afflicting, that her own mother's children were angry with her. But oppoſition only ſerves to whet the edge of true devotion, and therefore *Bartimeus*, inſtead of being ſilenced by their charges and threatnings, "cried out the more a great deal, thou Son of *David*, have mercy on me." Still he breaks out into the ſame humble language, and, if JESUS, the Son of *David*, will have mercy on him, he cares not much what ſome of his peeviſh followers ſaid of, or did unto him. This was not a vain repetition, but a devout reiteration of his requeſt. We may ſometimes repeat the ſame words, and yet not be guilty of that Βαττολογια, or vain ſpeaking, which our LORD condemns. For our LORD himſelf prayed in his agony, and ſaid twice the ſame words; "Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me." Thus *Bartimeus*, "JESUS, thou Son of *David*, have mercy upon me." And how does the Son of *David* treat him? does he join iſſue with the multitude, and charge him to hold his peace? or does he go on, thinking him

beneath his notice? no; for, ſays St. *Mark*, ver. 49. "And JESUS ſtood ſtill," though he was on a journey, and it may be in haſte (for it is not loſing time to ſtop now and then on a journey to do a good office by the way) "and commanded him to be called:" why ſo? to teach us to be condeſcending and kind even to poor, if real beggars, and tacitly to reprove the blind, miſguided zeal of thoſe who had charged him to hold his peace. By this alſo our LORD prepares the multitude the better to take the more notice of the blind man's faith, and of his own mercy and power exerted in the healing of him. For there are times and ſeaſons when we are called to perform acts of charity in the moſt public manner, and that too very conſiſtently with the injunction of our Saviour, "not to let our right hand know what our left hand doth." For there is a great deal of difference between giving alms, and exerciſing acts of charity, that are ſeen of men, and doing them, that they may be ſeen; the one is always ſinful, the other often becomes our duty. JESUS commanded *Bartimeus* to be called, "and they called him." Who called him? it may be, thoſe who a little before charged him to hold his peace. For it often happens, that our oppoſers and diſcouragers, afterwards become our friends. "When a man's ways pleaſe the LORD, he makes his enemies be at peace with him." And it is to be wiſhed, that all who have charged poor ſouls, that are crying after JESUS, to hold their peace, and to ſpare themſelves, and not be righteous over-much, would imitate the people here, and encourage thoſe they once perſecuted and maligned. "They call the blind man, ſaying unto him, Be of good comfort, riſe, he calleth thee." The words, and manner of ſpeaking them, implies haſte, and a kind of ſolicitude for the blind man's relief. O! that we might hereby learn to be patient, and long-ſuffering, towards oppoſers. For it may be, that many may oppoſe awakened ſouls, not out of enmity, but through prejudice and miſinformation, through ignorance and unbelief, and a real, though perhaps falſe, perſuaſion, that their relations are going in a wrong way. By and by they may be convinced, that CHRIST is indeed calling them, and then they may become real and open friends to the cauſe and work of GOD; if not, it is our duty to behave with meekneſs towards all, and not to render railing for railing, but contrary-

wiſe

wiſe bleſſing, knowing that we are thereunto called, that we may inherit a bleſſing; JESUS did not break out into harſh language againſt theſe oppoſers, neither did *Bartimeus*. "Our LORD ſtood ſtill, and commanded him to be called; and they call the blind man, ſaying unto him, Be of good comfort, riſe, he calleth thee; and he, caſting away his garment, roſe and came to JESUS." Had *Bartimeus* not been in earneſt when he cried, "JESUS, thou Son of *David*, have mercy upon me," he might have ſaid, why do you mock me? why bid ye me ariſe; riſe indeed I can, but after I am riſen, how can I, being blind, find my way unto him? If he will come to me, it is well; if not, all your calling availeth nothing, it being impoſſible for me to find my way. Thus thouſands now-a-days object to evangelical preachers, ſaying, Why do you bid us come to, and believe on JESUS CHRIST, when you tell us it is impoſſible of ourſelves to turn to GOD, or to do good works; and that no one can come unto him, unleſs the Father draw him. Is not this like the people's calling upon *Bartimeus*, to ariſe and come to JESUS, when he could not poſſibly ſee his way before him? true, it is ſo; and would to GOD that all who make this objection, would imitate *Bartimeus*, and put forth the ſtrength they have! What if we do call you to come, and to believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that you may be ſaved? does this imply, that you have a power in yourſelves to do ſo? no, in no wiſe, no more than JESUS ſaying unto *Lazarus*'s dead and ſtinking carcaſe, "Come forth," implied, that *Lazarus* had a power to raiſe himſelf from the grave. We call to you, being commanded to preach the goſpel to every creature, hoping and praying, that CHRIST's power may accompany the word, and make it effectual to the quickening and raiſing of your dead ſouls. We alſo call to you to believe, upon the ſame account as JESUS ſaid unto the lawyer, "do this, and thou ſhalt live;" that you ſeeing your utter inability to come, might thereby be convinced of your unbelief, and be led to aſk for faith of him, whoſe gift it is, and who is therefore in ſcripture emphatically ſtiled the *Author*, as well as *Finiſher*, of our faith. Add to this, that it is your duty to wait at the pool, or to make uſe of the ſtrength you have, in the earneſt and ſteady performance of all commanded duty. For though you cannot do what is ſpiritually good,

good, becauſe you want ſpiritual principles of action, yet ye may do what is morally and materially good, inaſmuch as ye are reaſonable creatures; and though doing your duty as you can, no ways deſerves mercy, or entitles you to it, yet it is the way in which GOD is uſually found. While you are attempting to ſtretch out your withered arm, peradventure it may be reſtored; and who knows but JESUS may work faith in you, by his almighty power?

Bartimeus has ſet before ſuch objectors an example; O that they would once ſubmit to be taught by a poor blind beggar! For he, caſting away his garment, roſe, and blind as he was, came to JESUS; "caſting away his garment." This ſeems to be a large coat or cloak, that he wore to ſcreen himſelf from the rain and cold; undoubtedly, it was the moſt neceſſary and valuable veſtment he had, and one would have thought, that he ſhould have taken this along with him; but he knew very well, that if he did ſo, it might hang about his heels, and thereby his reaching JESUS be retarded at leaſt, if not prevented entirely. Valuable therefore as it was to him, he caſt it away. The word implies, that he threw it from off his ſhoulders, with great precipitancy and reſolution, knowing that if he got a cure, which he now hoped for, by CHRIST's calling him, he ſhould never want his garment again. And thus will all do that are in earneſt about coming to JESUS here, or ſeeing and enjoying him in his kingdom eternally hereafter. They will cut off a right-hand, they will pluck out a right-eye, they will leave father and mother, huſband and wife, yea, and their own lives alſo, rather than not be his diſciples. The apoſtle *Paul*, therefore, exhorts chriſtians, to "lay aſide every weight, and the ſin that doth moſt eaſily beſet them," or hang about their heels, as the word in the original imports; alluding to the cuſtom of the *Romans*, who wore long garments. Such a one was this, which *Bartimeus* had wrapped round him. But he, to ſhew that he ſincerely deſired to recover his ſight, caſting it away, aroſe and came to JESUS. And what treatment did JESUS give him? did he ſay, come not nigh me, thou impudent noiſy beggar? No, "he anſwered and ſaid unto him, What wilt thou, that I ſhould do unto thee?" an odd queſtion this, ſeemingly. For

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did not our LORD know what he wanted? yes, he did; but the LORD JESUS dealt with him, as he deals with us. He will make us acknowledge our wants ourſelves, that we thereby may confeſs our dependance upon him, and be made more ſenſible of the need we ſtand in, of his divine aſſiſtance. The blind man immediately replies, "LORD," (thereby intimating his belief of CHRIST's divinity) "that I might receive my ſight." Methinks, I ſee the poor creature liſtening to the voice of our Saviour, and with looks and geſtures beſpeaking the inward earneſtneſs of his ſoul, he cries out, "LORD, that I may receive my ſight." As though he had ſaid, I believe thou art that Meſſiah who was to come into the world. I have heard of thy fame, O JESUS! and hearing the long-wiſhed-for glad-tidings of thy coming this way, I cry unto thee, aſking not for ſilver and gold, but what thou, thou alone canſt give me, LORD, that I might receive my ſight. No ſooner does he aſk, but he receives. For, verſe 52, "JESUS ſaid unto him, Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole; and immediately he received his ſight." With the word there went a power; and he that ſpake light out of darkneſs, ſaying, "Let there be light, and there was light," commanded light into this poor blind beggar's eyes, and behold there was light. The miracle was inſtantaneous; *immediately* he received his ſight. And next to a miracle it was, that by breaking into open light all at once, he was not ſtruck blind again: but he that gave the ſight, preſerved it when given. O! happy *Bartimeus!* thy eyes are now opened, and the very firſt object thou doſt behold, is the ever-loving, altogether-lovely JESUS. Methinks I ſee thee tranſported with wonder and admiration, and all the diſciples, and the multitude, gazing around thee! And now, having received thy ſight, why doſt thou not obey the LORD's command, and go thy way? why doſt thou not haſte to fetch thy garment, that thou juſt now in a hurry didſt caſt away? No, no! with his bodily eyes, I believe he received alſo a freſh addition of ſpiritual ſight, and though others ſaw no form or comelineſs in the bleſſed JESUS, that they ſhould deſire him; yet he by an eye of faith diſcovered ſuch tranſcendent excellencies in his royal perſon, and felt at the ſame time ſuch a divine attraction towards his all-bountiful benefactor, that inſtead of going his way to fetch his garment, "he followed

JESUS

JESUS in the way;" and by his actions, ſays with faithful, honeſt-hearted *Ruth*, "entreat me not to leave thee; for whither thou goeſt, I will go; where thou lodgeſt, I will lodge; thy people ſhall be my people; and thy God, my GOD." He followed JESUS in the way; the narrow way, the way of the croſs; and I doubt not but long ſince he has followed him to his crown, and is at this time ſitting with him at the right hand of his Father.

And now, my dear hearers, how find you your hearts affected at the relation of this notable miracle which JESUS wrought? are you not ready to break out into the language of the ſong of *Moſes*, and to ſay, "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes, continually doing wonders!" Marvellous are thy works, O JESUS, and that our ſouls know right well! But we muſt not ſtop here, in admiring what the LORD did for *Bartimeus*; this, no doubt, as well as other parts of Scripture, was written for our learning, upon whom the ends of the world are come; conſequently, as was propoſed in the

Second place, we ſhould ſee what ſpiritual improvement can be made of this hiſtory, upon which we have already been making ſome remarks.

A natural man, indeed, goes no further than the outward court of the Scripture, and reads this, and the other miracles of our bleſſed Saviour, juſt in the ſame manner as he reads *Homer*'s battles, or the exploits of *Alexander*. But GOD forbid, that we ſhould reſt in only hearing this matter of fact. For I tell thee, O man, I tell thee, O woman, whoever thou art, that ſitteſt this day under a preached goſpel, that if thou art in a natural ſtate, thou art as blind in thy ſoul, as *Bartimeus* was in his body; a blind child of a blind father, even of thy father *Adam*, who loſt his ſight when he loſt his innocence, and entailed his blindneſs, juſtly inflicted, upon thee, and me, and his whole poſterity. Some think indeed, that they ſee; but alas! ſuch talk only like men in their ſleep, like perſons beſide themſelves; the ſcriptures every where repreſent fallen man, not only as ſpiritually blind, but dead alſo; and we no more know, by nature, ſavingly the way of ſalvation by JESUS CHRIST, than *Bartimeus*, when he was blind, knew the colours of the rainbow. This, I truſt, ſome of you

begin

begin to feel, I ſee you concerned, I ſee you weeping, and, was I to aſk ſome of you, what you want to have done unto you? I know your anſwer would be, that we may receive our ſight. And GOD forbid, that I ſhould charge you to hold your peace, as though JESUS would not regard you! no, your being made ſenſible of your natural blindneſs, and crying thus earneſtly after JESUS, is a ſign at leaſt, that you are awakened by his holy Spirit (though it is poſſible, that you may cry with an exceeding bitter cry, as *Eſau* did, and be loſt at laſt); however, chriſtian charity induces me to believe and hope the beſt; I will therefore, in the language of thoſe who afterwards encouraged *Bartimeus*, ſay unto you, Ariſe, take comfort; for, I truſt, JESUS is calling you; follow therefore the example of *Bartimeus*, caſt away your garment; lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth moſt eaſily beſet you, ariſe, and come to JESUS. He commands me, by his written word, to call to you, and ſay, "Come unto him, all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and he will refreſh you, he will give you reſt." Be not afraid, ye ſeek JESUS of *Nazareth*; behold, he comes forth to meet you; ye are now on the highway ſide, and JESUS, I truſt, is paſſing by; I feel his preſence, I hope many of you feel it too; O then, cry mightily to him, who is mighty and willing to ſave you; lay yourſelves at the feet of ſovereign grace, ſay unto him, "JESUS, thou Son of *David*, have mercy on me," in the ſame frame as *Bartimeus* did, and JESUS will anſwer you, he will not caſt out your prayer; according to your faith, ſo ſhall it be done unto you. Blind as you are, you ſhall, notwithſtanding, receive your ſight; Satan, indeed, and unbelief, will ſuggeſt many objections to you, your carnal relations will alſo join iſſue with them, and charge you to hold your peace; one will tell you, that your blindneſs is too inveterate to be cured; another, that it is too late; a third, that though JESUS can, yet he will not have mercy upon ſuch poor, blind, deſpicable beggars, as ye are; but, the more they charge you to hold your peace, do you cry out ſo much the more a great deal, "JESUS, thou Son of *David*, have mercy on us." JESUS, thou Saviour, thou friend of ſinners, thou Son of *David*, and therefore a Son of man! gracious words! endearing appellations! be encouraged by them, to draw nigh unto him. Though *David*'s Lord, yet

he is become *David*'s Son, after the flesh, that ye through him may be made the sons of GOD: no matter what thou art, O woman, what thou art, O man; though thou art literally a poor beggar, think not thy condition too mean for JESUS to take notice of; he came into the highways and hedges, to call such poor beggars in; or, if you are rich, think not yourselves too high to stoop to JESUS; for he is the King of kings; and you never will be truly rich, until you are made rich in JESUS; fear not being despised, or losing a little worldly honour: one sight of JESUS will make amends for all: you will find something so inviting, so attracting, so satisfying, in the altogether-lovely Lamb of GOD, that every sublunary enjoyment will sicken, and die, and vanish before you; and you will no more desire your former vain and trifling amusements, than *Bartimeus*, after he had received his sight, desired to go back again and fetch his garment. O that there may be many such blind beggars among you this day!

Here is a great multitude of people following me, a poor worm, this day. I rejoice to see the fields thus white, ready unto harvest, and to spread the gospel-net amidst so many; but alas! I shall return home with a heavy heart, unless some of you will arise and come to my JESUS; I desire to preach HIM, and not myself; rest not in hearing and following me. Behold, believe on, and follow the Lamb of GOD, who came to take away the sins of the world. Indeed, I do not despair of any of you, neither am I discouraged, on account of my preaching in the highways and hedges; JESUS called *Zacchæus*; JESUS called *Bartimeus*, as he passed through *Jericho*; that cursed, that devoted place; and why may he not call some of you, out of these despised fields? is his arm shortened, that he cannot save? is he not as mighty now, and as willing to save, even to the uttermost, all that come to the Father through him, as he was seventeen hundred years ago? assuredly he is; he hath said, and he also will do it, "Whosoever cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." In no wise, or by no means. O encouraging words! sinners, believe ye this? arise then, be of good comfort, for JESUS is indeed calling you. Some of you, I trust, have obeyed this invitation, and have had a sight of him long ago; I know then, you will bless and love him; and if he should say unto you, as he did unto *Bartimeus*, go

you

you your way; your anſwer would be, we love our maſter, and will not go from him. But ſuffer ye the word of exhortation:

Suffer me to ſtir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, ſhew that you have indeed ſeen him, and that you do indeed love him, by following him in the way; I mean, in the way of the croſs, the way of his ordinances, and in the way of his holy commandments; for alas! the love of many waxeth cold, and few there are that follow JESUS rightly in the way; few there are that caſt away their garments ſo heartily as they ſhould; ſome idol or another hangs about us, and hinders us in running the race that is ſet before us. Awake therefore, ye ſleepy, though, it may be, wiſe virgins. Awake, awake, put on ſtrength; ſhake yourſelves from the duſt; ariſe and follow JESUS more cloſely in the way, than ever you did yet. Lift up the hands that hang down, and ſtrengthen the feeble knees. Provide right paths for your feet, leſt that which is lame be turned out of the way, but rather be ye healed. For though the way be narrow, yet it is not long; "though the gate be ſtraight, (to uſe the words of pious "biſhop *Beveridge*) yet it opens into everlaſting life." O that ye may get a freſh ſight of him again this day! That would be like oil to the wheels of your graces, and make your ſouls like the chariots of *Aminadab*. It is only owing to your loſing ſight of him, that you go ſo heavily from day to day. A ſight of JESUS, like the ſun riſing in the morning, diſpels the darkneſs and gloominess that lies upon the ſoul. Take therefore a freſh view of him, O believers, and never reſt until you are tranſlated to ſee him as he is, and to live with him for evermore, in the kingdom of heaven. Even ſo, LORD JESUS, *Amen* and *Amen!*

SERMON XXVIII.

Directions how to hear Sermons.

LUKE viii. 18.

Take heed, therefore, how ye hear.

THE occaſion of our LORD's giving this caution, was this: Perceiving that much people were gathered together to hear him out of every city, and knowing (for he is GOD, and knoweth all things) that many, if not moſt of them, would be hearers only, and not doers of the word; he ſpake to them by a parable, wherein, under the ſimilitude of a ſower that went out to ſow his ſeed, he plainly intimated, how few there were amongſt them, who would receive any ſaving benefit from his doctrine, or bring forth fruit unto perfection.

The application one would imagine ſhould have been plain and obvious; but the diſciples, as yet unenlightened in any great degree by the Holy Spirit, and therefore unable to ſee into the hidden myſteries of the kingdom of GOD, dealt with our Saviour, as people ought to deal with their miniſters; they diſcourſed with him privately about the meaning of what he had taught them in public; and with a ſincere deſire of doing their duty, aſked for an interpretation of the parable.

Our bleſſed LORD, as he always was willing to inſtruct thoſe that were teachable, (herein ſetting his miniſters an example to be courteous and eaſy of acceſs) freely told them the ſignification. And withal, to make them more cautious and more attentive to his doctrine for the future, he tells them, that they were in an eſpecial manner to be the light of the world, and were to proclaim on the houſe-top whatſoever he told them in ſecret: and as their improving the knowledge already

already imparted, was the only condition upon which more was to be given them, it therefore highly concerned them to "take heed how they heard."

From the context then it appears, that the words were primarily ſpoken to the Apoſtles themſelves. But as it is to be feared, out of thoſe many thouſands that flock to hear ſermons, but few, comparatively ſpeaking, are effectually influenced by them, I cannot but think it very neceſſary to remind you of the caution given by our LORD to his diſciples, and to exhort you with the utmoſt earneſtneſs, to "take heed how you hear."

In proſecution of which deſign I ſhall,

Firſt, Prove that every one ought to take all opportunities of hearing ſermons. And,

Secondly, I ſhall lay down ſome cautions and directions, in order to your hearing with profit and advantage.

Firſt, I am to prove, that every one ought to take all opportunities of hearing ſermons.

That there have always been particular perſons ſet apart by GOD, to inſtruct and exhort his people to practiſe what he ſhould require of them, is evident from many paſſages of ſcripture. St. *Jude* tells us, that "*Enoch*, the ſeventh from *Adam*, propheſied (or preached) concerning the LORD's coming with ten thouſand of his ſaints to judgment." And *Noah*, who lived not long after, is ſtiled by St. *Peter*, "a preacher of righteouſneſs." And though in all the intermediate ſpace between the flood and giving of the law, we hear but of few preachers, yet we may reaſonably conclude, that GOD never left himſelf without witneſs, but at ſundry times, and after divers manners, ſpoke to our fathers by the patriarchs and prophets.

But however it was before, we are aſſured that after the delivery of the law, GOD conſtantly ſeparated to himſelf a certain order of men to preach to, as well as pray for his people, and commanded them to enquire their duty at the prieſts mouths. And though the *Jews* were frequently led into

captivity, and for their ſins ſcattered abroad on the face of the earth, yet he never utterly forſook his church, but ſtill kept up a remnant of prophets and preachers, as *Ezekiel*, *Jeremiah*, *Daniel*, and others, to reprove, inſtruct, and call them to repentance.

Thus was it under the law. Nor has the church been worſe, but infinitely better provided for under the goſpel. For when JESUS CHRIST, that great High-prieſt, had through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf, as a fully perfect, ſufficient ſacrifice and ſatisfaction for the ſins of the whole world, and after his reſurrection had all power committed to him, both in heaven and earth, he gave commiſſion to his Apoſtles, and in them to all ſucceeding miniſters, to "go and preach his goſpel to every creature;" promiſing to "to be with them, to guide, aſſiſt, ſtrengthen, and comfort them always, even to the end of the world."

But if it be the duty of miniſters to preach, (and woe be to them if they do not preach the goſpel, for a neceſſity is laid upon them) no doubt, the people are obliged to attend to them; for otherwiſe, wherefore are miniſters ſent?

And how can we here avoid admiring the love and tender care which our dear Redeemer has expreſſed for his ſpouſe the church? Who, becauſe he could not be always with us in perſon, on account it was expedient he ſhould go away, and as our forerunner take poſſeſſion of that glory he had purchaſed by his precious blood, yet would not leave us comfortleſs, but firſt ſettled a ſufficient number of paſtors and teachers; and afterwards, according to his promiſe, actually did and will continue to ſend down the Holy Ghoſt, to furniſh them and their ſucceſſors with proper gifts and graces "for the work of the miniſtry, for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the edifying of his body in love, till we all come in the unity of the ſpirit, to the fulneſs of the meaſure of the ſtature of CHRIST."

O how inſenſible are thoſe perſons of this unſpeakable gift, who do deſpite to the Spirit of grace, who crucify the Son of GOD afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame, by wilfully refuſing to attend on ſo great a means of their ſalvation? How dreadful will the end of ſuch men be? How aggravating, that light ſhould come into the world, that the glad tidings

tidings of ſalvation ſhould be ſo very frequently proclaimed in this populous city, and that ſo many ſhould loath this ſpiritual manna, this angels food, and call it light bread? How much more tolerable will it be for *Tyre* and *Sidon*, for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, than for ſuch ſinners? Better, than men had never heard of a Saviour being born, than after they have heard, not to give heed to the miniſtry of thoſe, who are employed as his ambaſſadors, to tranſact affairs between GOD and their ſouls.

We may, though at a diſtance, without a ſpirit of propheſy, foretel the deplorable condition of ſuch men; behold them caſt into hell, lifting up their eyes, being in torment, and crying out, How often would our miniſters have gathered us, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings? But we would not. O that we had known in that our day, the things that belonged to our everlaſting peace! But now they are for ever hid from our eyes.

Thus wretched, thus inconceiveably miſerable, will ſuch be as ſlight and make a mock at the public preaching of the goſpel. But taking it for granted, there are but few, if any, of this unhappy ſtamp, who think it worth their while to tread the courts of the LORD's houſe, I paſs on now to the

Second general thing propoſed, to lay down ſome cautions and directions, in order to your hearing ſermons with profit and advantage.

And here, if we reflect on what has been already delivered, and conſider that preaching is an ordinance of GOD, a means appointed by JESUS CHRIST himſelf for promoting his kingdom amongſt men, you cannot reaſonably be offended, if, in order that you may hear ſermons with profit and advantage, I

1. Direct or entreat you to come to hear them, not out of curioſity, but from a ſincere deſire to know and do your duty.

Formality and hypocriſy in any religious exerciſe, is an abomination unto the LORD. And to enter his houſe merely to have our ears entertained, and not our hearts reformed, muſt certainly be highly diſpleaſing to the Moſt High GOD, as well as unprofitable to ourſelves.

Hence it is, that ſo many remain unconverted, yea, unaffected with the moſt evangelical preaching; ſo that like St. *Paul*'s companions, before his converſion, they only hear the preacher's voice with their outward ears, but do not experience the power of it inwardly in their hearts: Or, like the ground near *Gideon*'s fleece, they remain untouched; whilſt others, who came to be fed with the ſincere milk of the word, like the fleece itſelf, are watered by the dew of GOD's heavenly bleſſing, and grow thereby.

Flee therefore, my brethren, flee curioſity, and prepare your hearts by a humble diſpoſition, to receive with meekneſs the engrafted word, and then it will be a means, under GOD, to quicken, build up, purify, and ſave your ſouls.

2. A ſecond direction I ſhall lay down for the ſame purpoſe, is, not only to prepare your hearts before you hear, but alſo to give diligent heed to the things that are ſpoken from the word of GOD.

If an earthly king was to iſſue out a royal proclamation, on performing or not performing the conditions therein contained, the life or death of his ſubjects entirely depended, how ſolicitous would they be to hear what thoſe conditions were? And ſhall not we pay the ſame reſpect to the King of kings, and LORD of lords, and lend an attentive ear to his miniſters, when they are declaring, in his name, how our pardon, peace, and happineſs may be ſecured?

When GOD deſcended on mount *Sinai* in terrible majeſty, to give unto his people the law, how attentive were they to his ſervant *Moſes*? And if they were ſo earneſt to hear the thunderings or threatenings of the law, ſhall not we be as ſolicitous to hear from the miniſters of CHRIST, the glad tidings of the goſpel?

Whilſt CHRIST was himſelf on earth, it is ſaid, that the people hung upon him to hear the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. And if we looked on miniſters as we ought, as the ſent of JESUS CHRIST, we ſhould hang upon them to hear their words alſo.

Beſides, the ſacred truths that goſpel miniſters deliver, are not dry inſipid lectures on moral philoſophy, intended only to amuſe us for a while; but the great myſteries of godlineſs, which, therefore, we are bound ſtudiouſly to liſten to, leſt through

through our negligence we ſhould either not underſtand them, or by any other means let them ſlip.

But how regardleſs are thoſe of this direction, who, inſtead of hanging on the preacher to hear him, doze or ſleep whilſt he is ſpeaking to them from GOD? Unhappy men! Can they not watch with our bleſſed LORD one hour? What! have they never read how *Eutychus* fell down as he was ſleeping, when St. *Paul* continued his diſcourſe till midnight, and was taken up dead?

But to return, Though you may prepare your hearts, as you may think, by a teachable diſpoſition, and be attentive whilſt diſcourſes are delivering, yet this will profit you little, unleſs you obſerve a

3. A third direction, Not to entertain any the leaſt prejudice againſt the miniſter.

For could a preacher ſpeak with the tongue of men and angels, if his audience was prejudiced againſt him, he would be but as ſounding braſs, or tinkling cymbal.

That was the reaſon why JESUS CHRIST himſelf, the Eternal Word, could not do many mighty works; nor preach to any great effect among thoſe of his own country; for they were offended at him: And was this ſame JESUS, this GOD incarnate, again to bow the heavens, and to come down ſpeaking as never man ſpake, yet, if we were prejudiced againſt him, as the *Jews* were, we ſhould harden our hearts as the *Jews* did theirs.

Take heed therefore, my brethren, and beware of entertaining any diſlike againſt thoſe whom the Holy Ghoſt has made overſeers over you. Conſider that the clergy are men of like paſſions with yourſelves: and though we ſhould even hear a perſon teaching others to do, what he has not learned himſelf; yet, that is no ſufficient reaſon for rejecting his doctrine: for miniſters ſpeak not in their own, but CHRIST's name. And we know who commanded the people to do whatſoever the Scribes and Phariſees ſhould ſay unto them, though they ſaid but did not. But

4. *Fourthly*, As you ought not to be prejudiced againſt, ſo you ſhould be careful not to depend too much on a preacher, or think more highly of him than you ought to think. For though this be an extream that people ſeldom run into, yet

preferring one teacher in oppoſition to another, has often been of ill conſequence to the church of GOD. It was a fault which the great Apoſtle of the *Gentiles* condemned in the *Corinthians:* For whereas one ſaid, "I am of *Paul*; another, I am of *Apollos*: are ye not carnal," ſays he? "For who is *Paul*, and who is *Apollos*, but inſtruments in GOD's hands by whom you believed?" And are not all miniſters ſent forth to be miniſtring ambaſſadors to thoſe who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation? And are they not all therefore greatly to be eſteemed for their work's ſake.

The Apoſtle, it is true, commands us to pay double honour to thoſe who labour in the word and doctrine: but then to prefer one miniſter at the expence of another, (perhaps, to ſuch a degree, as when you have actually entered a church, to come out again becauſe he does not preach) is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh.

Not to mention that popularity and applauſe cannot but be exceedingly dangerous, even to a rightly informed mind; and muſt neceſſarily fill any thinking man with a holy jealouſy, leſt he ſhould take that honour to himſelf, which is due only to GOD, who alone qualifies him for his miniſterial labours, and from whom alone every good and perfect gift cometh.

5. A *Fifth* direction I would recommend is, to make a particular application of every thing that is delivered to your own hearts.

When our Saviour was diſcourſing at the laſt ſupper with his beloved diſciples, and foretold that one of them ſhould betray him, each of them immediately applied it to his own heart, and ſaid, "LORD, is it I?" And would perſons, in like manner, when preachers are diſſuading from any ſin, or perſuading to any duty, inſtead of crying, this was deſigned againſt ſuch and ſuch a one, turn their thoughts inwardly, and ſay, LORD, is it I? how far more beneficial ſhould we find diſcourſes to be, than now they generally are?

But we are apt to wander too much abroad; always looking at the mote which is in our neighbour's eye, rather than at the beam which is in our own. Haſte we now to the

6. *Sixth* and laſt direction: If you would receive a bleſſing from the LORD, when you hear his word preached, pray to him,

him, both before, in, and after every ſermon, to endue the miniſter with power, to ſpeak, and to grant you a will and ability to put in practice, what he ſhall ſhew from the book of GOD to be your duty.

This would be an excellent means to render the word preached effectual to the enlightening and enflaming your hearts; and without this, all the other means before preſcribed will be in vain.

No doubt it was this conſideration that made St. *Paul* ſo earneſtly entreat his beloved *Epheſians* to intercede with GOD for him: "Praying always, with all manner of prayer and ſupplication in the ſpirit, and for me alſo, that I may open my mouth with boldneſs, to make known the myſteries of the goſpel." And if ſo great an Apoſtle as St. *Paul*, needed the prayers of his people, much more do thoſe miniſters, who have only the ordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Beſides, this would be a good proof that you ſincerely deſired to do, as well as to know the will of GOD. And it muſt highly profit both miniſters and people; becauſe GOD, through your prayers, will give them a double portion of his Holy Spirit, whereby they will be enabled to inſtruct you more fully in the things which pertain to the kingdom of GOD.

And O that all who hear me this day, would ſeriouſly apply their hearts to practiſe what has now been told them! How would miniſters ſee Satan, like lightning, fall from heaven, and people find the word preached ſharper than a two-edged ſword, and mighty, through GOD, to the pulling down of the devil's ſtrong holds!

The Holy Ghoſt would then fall on all them that hear the word, as when St. *Peter* preached; the goſpel of CHRIST would have free courſe, run very ſwiftly, and thouſands again be converted by a ſermon.

For "JESUS CHRIST is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever." He has promiſed to be with his miniſters always, even unto the end of the world. And the reaſon why we do not receive larger effuſions of the bleſſed Spirit of GOD, is not becauſe our all-powerful Redeemer's hand is ſhortened, but becauſe we do not expect them, and confine them to the primitive times.

It does indeed sometimes happen, that God, to magnify his free grace in Christ Jesus, is found of them that sought him not; a notorious sinner is forcibly worked upon by a public sermon, and plucked as a firebrand out of the fire. But this is not God's ordinary way of acting: No, for the generality, he only visits those with the power of his word, who humbly wait to know what he would have them to do; and sends unqualified hearers not only empty, but hardened away.

Take heed, therefore, ye careless, curious professors, if any such be here present, how you hear. Remember, that whether we think of it or not, "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ;" where ministers must give a strict account of the doctrine they have delivered, and you as strict a one, how you have improved under it. And, good God! how will you be able to stand at the bar of an angry, sin-avenging judge, and see so many discourses you have despised, so many ministers, who once longed and laboured for the salvation of your precious and immortal souls, brought out as so many swift witnesses against you? Will it be sufficient then, think you, to alledge, that you went to hear them only out of curiosity, to pass away an idle hour, to admire the oratory, or ridicule the simplicity of the preacher? No; God will then let you know, that you ought to have come out of better principles; that every sermon has been put down to your account, and that you must then be justly punished for not improving by them.

But fear not, you little flock, who with meekness receive the ingrafted word, and bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness; for it shall not be so with you. No, you will be your minister's joy, and their crown of rejoicing in the day of our Lord Jesus: And they will present you in a holy triumph, faultless and unblameable, to our common Redeemer, saying, "Behold us, O Lord, and the children which thou hast given us."

But still take heed how you hear: for upon your improving the grace you have, more shall be given, and you shall have abundance. "He is faithful that has promised, who also will do it." Nay, God from out of *Sion*, shall so bless you, that every sermon you hear shall communicate to you a

freſh ſupply of ſpiritual knowledge. The word of God ſhall dwell in you richly; you ſhall go on from ſtrength to ſtrength, from one degree of grace unto another, till being grown up to be perfect men in CHRIST JESUS, and filled with all the fulneſs of GOD, you ſhall be tranſlated by death to ſee him as he is, and to ſing praiſes before his throne with angels and archangels, cherubim and ſeraphim, and the general aſſembly of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven, for ever and ever.

Which GOD, &c.

SERMON

SERMON XXIX.

The Extent and Reaſonableneſs of Self-Denial.

LUKE ix. 23.

And he ſaid unto them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf.

WHOEVER reads the goſpel with a ſingle eye, and ſincere intention, will find, that our bleſſed LORD took all opportunities of reminding his diſciples that his kingdom was not of this world; that his doctrine was a doctrine of the croſs; and that their profeſſing themſelves to be his followers, would call them to a conſtant ſtate of voluntary ſuffering and ſelf-denial.

The words of the text afford us one inſtance, among many, of our Saviour's behaviour in this matter: for having in the preceding verſes revealed himſelf to *Peter*, and the other apoſtles, to be "The CHRIST of GOD;" leſt they ſhould be too much elated with ſuch a peculiar diſcovery of his glory, or think that their relation to ſo great a perſonage would be attended with nothing but pomp and grandeur, he tells them, in the 22d verſe, that "the ſon of man was to ſuffer many things," in this world, though he was to be crowned with eternal glory and honour in the next: and that if any of them or their poſterity would ſhare in the ſame honour, they muſt bear a part with him in his ſelf-denial and ſufferings. For "He ſaid unto them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf."

From which words I ſhall conſider theſe three things:

I. *Firſt*, The nature of the ſelf-denial recommended in the text; and in how many reſpects we muſt deny ourſelves, in order to come after JESUS CHRIST.

I.

II. *Secondly*, I ſhall endeavour to prove the univerſality and reaſonableneſs of this duty of ſelf-denial.

III. *Thirdly*, I ſhall offer ſome conſiderations, which may ſerve as ſo many motives to reconcile us to, and quicken us in, the practice of this ſelf-denial.

I. *Firſt*, I am to ſhew you the nature of the ſelf-denial recommended in the text; or in how many reſpects we muſt deny ourſelves in order to follow JESUS CHRIST.

Now as the faculties of the ſoul are diſtinguiſhed by the underſtanding, will and affections; ſo in all theſe muſt each of us deny himſelf. We muſt not lean to our own underſtanding, being wiſe in our own eyes, and prudent in our own ſight; but we muſt ſubmit our ſhort-ſighted reaſon to the light of divine revelation. There are myſteries in religion, which are above, though not contrary to our natural reaſon: and therefore we ſhall never become chriſtians unleſs we caſt down imaginations, "and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of GOD, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of CHRIST." It is in this reſpect, as well as others, that we muſt become fools for CHRIST's ſake, and acknowledge we know nothing without revelation, as we ought to know. We muſt, with all humility and reverence, embrace the truths revealed to us in the holy ſcriptures; for thus only can we become truly wiſe, even "Wiſe unto ſalvation." It was matter of our bleſſed LORD's thankſgiving to his heavenly father, that he had "hidden theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes." And in this reſpect alſo we muſt "be converted and become as little children," teachable, and willing to follow the Lamb into whatſoever myſteries he ſhall be pleaſed to lead us; and believe and practiſe all divine truths, not becauſe we can demonſtrate them, but becauſe GOD, "who cannot lye," has revealed them to us.

Hence then we may trace infidelity to its fountain head: for it is nothing elſe, but a pride of the underſtanding, an unwillingneſs to ſubmit to the truths of GOD, that makes ſo many, profeſſing themſelves wiſe, to become ſuch fools as to deny the LORD, who has ſo dearly bought them; and diſpute the divinity of that eternal Word, "in whom they live, "and move, and have their being:" Whereby it is juſtly to

be

be feared, they will bring upon themſelves ſure, if not ſwift deſtruction.

But, as we muſt deny ourſelves in our underſtandings, ſo muſt we deny, or, as it might be more properly rendered, renounce our wills: that is, we muſt make our own wills no principle of action, but "whether we eat or drink, or whatſoever we do, we muſt do all, (not merely to pleaſe ourſelves, but) to the glory of GOD." Not that we are therefore to imagine we are to have no pleaſure in any thing we do: "Wiſdom's ways are ways of pleaſantneſs;" but pleaſing ourſelves muſt not be the principal, but only the ſubordinate end of our actions.

And I cannot but particularly preſs this doctrine upon you, becauſe it is the grand ſecret of our holy religion. It is this, my brethren, that diſtinguiſhes the true chriſtian from the mere moraliſt and formal profeſſor; and without which none of our actions are acceptable in GOD's ſight: For "if thine eye be ſingle," ſays our bleſſed LORD, *Matth.* vi. 22. that is, if thou aimeſt ſimply to pleaſe GOD, without any regard to thy own will, "thy whole body, (or all thy actions) will be full of light;" agreeable to the goſpel, which is called light: "But if thine eye be evil, (if thine intention be diverted any other way) thy whole body, (all thy actions) will be full of darkneſs," ſinful and unprofitable, we muſt not only do the will of GOD, but do it becauſe it is his will; ſince we pray that "GOD's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven." And no doubt, the bleſſed angels not only do every thing that GOD willeth, but do it chearfully, out of this principle, becauſe GOD willeth it: And if we would live as we pray, we muſt go and do likewiſe.

But farther; as we muſt renounce our wills in doing, ſo likewiſe muſt we renounce them in ſuffering the will of GOD. Whatſoever befals us, we muſt ſay with good old *Eli*, "It is the LORD, let him do what ſeemeth him good;" or with one that was infinitely greater than *Eli*, "Father, not my will, but thine be done." O JESUS, thine was an innocent will, and yet thou renounceddſt it: Teach us, even us alſo, O our Saviour! to ſubmit our wills to thine, in all the evils which ſhall be brought upon us; and in every thing enable us to give thanks, ſince it is thy bleſſed will concerning us!

Thirdly,

Thirdly, we muſt deny ourſelves, as in our underſtandings and wills, ſo likewiſe in our affections. More particularly, we muſt deny ourſelves the pleaſurable indulgence and ſelf-enjoyment of riches: "If any man will come after me, he muſt forſake all and follow me." And again (to ſhew the utter inconſiſtency of the love of the things of this world with the love of the Father) he tells us, "unleſs a man forſake all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple."

Far be it from me to think that theſe texts are to be taken in a literal ſenſe; as though they obliged rich perſons to go ſell all that they have and give to the poor, (for that would put it out of their power to be ſerviceable to the poor for the future) but however, they certainly imply thus much, that we are to ſit looſe to, ſell and forſake all in affection, and be willing to part with every thing, when GOD ſhall require it at our hands: that is, as the apoſtle obſerves, we muſt "uſe the world as though we uſed it not;" and though we are in the world, we muſt not be of it. We muſt look upon ourſelves as ſtewards, and not proprietors, of the manifold gifts of GOD; provide firſt what is neceſſary for ourſelves and for our houſholds, and expend the reſt, not in indulgencies and ſuperfluous ornaments, forbidden by the apoſtle, but in cloathing, feeding, and relieving the naked, hungry, diſtreſſed diſciples of JESUS CHRIST. This is what our bleſſed LORD would have us underſtand by forſaking all, and in this ſenſe muſt each of us deny himſelf.

I am ſenſible that this will ſeem an hard ſaying to many, who will be offended becauſe they are covetous, and "lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of GOD:" but if I yet pleaſed ſuch men, I ſhould not be the ſervant of CHRIST. No, we muſt not, like *Ahab*'s falſe prophets, have a lying ſpirit in our mouths, but declare faithfully the whole will of GOD; and like honeſt *Micajah*, out of pity and compaſſion, tell men the truth, though they may falſely think we prophecy not good but evil concerning them.

But to proceed: As we muſt renounce our affection for riches, ſo likewiſe our affections for relations, when they ſtand in oppoſition to our love of, and duty to GOD: For thus ſaith the Saviour of the world: "If any man will come after me, and hateth not his father and mother, his

his children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple." Strange doctrine this! What, hate our own fleſh! What, hate the father that begat us, the mother that bare us! How can theſe things be? Can GOD contradict himſelf? Has he not bid us to honour our father and mother? and yet we are here commanded to hate them. How can theſe truths be reconciled? By interpreting the word hate, not in a rigorous and abſolute ſenſe, but comparatively: not as implying a total alienation, but a leſs degree of affection. For thus our bleſſed Saviour himſelf (the beſt and ſureſt expoſitor of his own meaning) explains it in a parallel text, *Matth.* x. 37. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: He that loveth ſon or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." So that when the perſuaſions of our friends (as for our trial they may be permitted to be) are contrary to the will of GOD, we muſt ſay with *Levi*, "we have not known them;" or, agreeably to our bleſſed LORD's rebuke to *Peter*, "Get you behind me, my adverſaries; for you ſavour not the things that be of GOD, but the things that be of man."

Farther, we muſt deny ourſelves in things indifferent: for it might eaſily be ſhewn, that as many, if not more, periſh by an immoderate uſe of things in themſelves indifferent, as by any groſs ſin whatever. A prudent chriſtian therefore, will conſider not only what is lawful, but what is expedient alſo: not ſo much what degrees of ſelf-denial beſt ſuit his inclinations here, as what will moſt effectually break his will, and fit him for greater degrees of glory hereafter.

Laſtly, To conclude this head, we muſt renounce our own righteouſneſs: For, though we ſhould give all our goods to feed the poor, and our bodies to be burned, yet, if we in the leaſt depend on that, and do not wholly rely on the perfect all-ſufficient righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST, it will profit us nothing. "CHRIST is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth." We are compleat in him, and him only. Our own righteouſneſſes are but as filthy rags. We muſt count all things but dung and droſs, ſo that we may be found in him, not having our own righteouſneſs, but the righteouſneſs which is of GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

And

And is this the doctrine of chriſtianity? is not the chriſtian world then aſleep? If not, whence ſo much ſelf-righteouſneſs, whence the ſelf-indulgence, whence the reigning love of riches which we every where meet with? Above all, whence that predominant greedineſs after ſenſual pleaſure, that has ſo over-run this ſinful nation, that was a pious ſtranger to come amongſt us, he would be tempted to think ſome heathen Venus was worſhipped here, and that temples were dedicated to her ſervice. But we have the authority of an inſpired apoſtle to affirm, that they who live in a round of pleaſure, "are dead while they live." Wherefore, as the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, "Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and CHRIST ſhall give thee light." But the power of raiſing the ſpiritually dead belongeth only unto GOD. Do thou therefore, O Holy JESUS, who by thy almighty word commandeſt *Lazarus* to come forth, though he had lain in the grave ſome days, ſpeak alſo as effectually to theſe ſpiritually dead ſouls, whom Satan for many years hath ſo faſt bound by ſenſual pleaſures, that they are not ſo much as able to lift up their eyes or hearts to heaven.

II. But I paſs on to the ſecond general thing propoſed, to conſider the univerſal obligation and reaſonableneſs of this doctrine of ſelf-denial.

When our bleſſed maſter had been diſcourſing publicly concerning the watchfulneſs of the faithful and wiſe ſteward, his diſciples aſked him, "Speakeſt thou this parable to all, or only to us?" The ſame queſtion I am aware has been, and will be put concerning the foregoing doctrine: for too many, unwilling to take CHRIST's eaſy yoke upon them, in order to evade the force of the goſpel precepts, would pretend that all thoſe commands concerning ſelf-denial, and renouncing ourſelves and the world, belonged to our LORD's firſt and immediate followers, and not to us or to our children. But ſuch perſons greatly err, not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of godlineſs in their hearts. For the doctrine of JESUS CHRIST, like his bleſſed ſelf, is "the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever." What he ſaid unto one, he ſaid unto all, even unto the ends of the world; "If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf:" and in the text it is parti-

cularly mentioned that he ſaid it unto them ALL. And leſt we ſhould ſtill abſurdly imagine that this word ALL was to be confined to his apoſtles, with whom he was then diſcourſing, it is ſaid in another place, that JESUS turned unto the multitude and ſaid, "If any man will come after me, and hateth not his father and mother, yea and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple." When our bleſſed LORD had ſpoken a certain parable, it is ſaid, "the ſcribes and Phariſees were offended, for they knew the parable was ſpoken againſt them:" And if chriſtians can now read theſe plain and poſitive texts of ſcripture, and at the ſame time not think they are ſpoken of them, they are more hardened than *Jews*, and more inſincere than Phariſees *.

In the former part of this diſcourſe I obſerved, that the precepts concerning forſaking and ſelling all, did not oblige us in a literal ſenſe, becauſe the ſtate of the church does not demand it of us, as it did of the primitive chriſtians; but ſtill the ſame deadneſs to the world, the ſame abſtemious uſe of, and readineſs to part with our goods for CHRIST'S ſake, is as abſolutely neceſſary for, and as obligatory on us, as it was on them. For though the church may differ as to the outward ſtate of it, in different ages, yet as to the purity of its inward ſtate, it was, is, and always will be invariably the ſame. And all the commands which we meet with in the epiſtles, about "mortifying our members which are upon the earth, of ſetting our affections on things above, and of not being conformed to this world;" are but ſo many inconteſtible proofs that the ſame holineſs, heavenly-mindedneſs, and deadneſs to the world, is as neceſſary for us, as for our LORD'S immediate followers.

But farther, as ſuch an objection argues an ignorance of the ſcriptures, ſo it is a manifeſt proof, that ſuch as make it are ſtrangers to the power of godlineſs in their hearts. For ſince the ſum and ſubſtance of religion conſiſts in recovery from our fallen eſtate in *Adam*, by a new-birth in CHRIST JESUS, there is an abſolute neceſſity for us to embrace and practiſe the ſelf-denial before ſpoken of. If we are alive unto GOD, we ſhall be dead to ourſelves and the world. If all things belonging to the ſpirit live and grow in us, all things belonging to the old man muſt die in us. We muſt mourn

* Law's *Chriſtian Perfection.*

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before we are comforted, and receive the ſpirit of bondage before we are bleſſed with the unſpeakable privilege of the ſpirit of adoption, and with a full aſſurance of faith can ſay, "Abba, Father."

Were we indeed in a ſtate of innocence, and had we, like *Adam* before his fall, the divine image fully ſtamped upon our ſouls, we then ſhould have no need of ſelf-denial; but ſince we are fallen, ſickly, diſordered, ſelf-righteous creatures, we muſt neceſſarily deny ourſelves (and count it our privilege to do ſo) ere we can follow JESUS CHRIST to glory. To reject ſuch a ſalutary practice on account of the difficulty attending it at firſt, is but too like the obſtinacy of a perverſe ſick child, who nauſeates and refuſes the potion reached out to it by a ſkilful phyſician or a tender parent, becauſe it is a little ungrateful to the taſte.

Had any of us ſeen *Lazarus* when he lay full of ſores at the rich man's gate; or *Job* when he was ſmitten with ulcers, from the crown of his head to the ſole of his foot: And had we at the ſame time preſcribed to them ſome healing medicines, which, becauſe they might put them to pain, they would not apply to their wounds, ſhould we not moſt juſtly think, that they were either fond of a diſtempered body, or were not ſenſible of their diſtempers? But our ſouls, by nature, are in an infinitely more deplorable condition than the bodies of *Job* or *Lazarus*, when full of ulcers and boils: for, alas! "our whole head is ſick, and our whole heart faint, from the crown of the head to the ſole of the foot, we are full of wounds and bruiſes and putrifying ſores, and there is no health in us." And if we are unwilling to deny ourſelves, and come after JESUS CHRIST in order to be cured, it is a ſign we are not ſenſible of the wretchedneſs of our ſtate, and that we are not truly made whole.

Even *Naaman*'s ſervants could ſay, when he refuſed (purſuant to *Eliſha*'s orders) to waſh in the river *Jordan*, that he might cure his leproſy, "Father, if the prophet had bid thee do ſome great thing, wouldſt thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he ſaith to thee, waſh and be clean?" And may not I very properly addreſs myſelf to you in the ſame manner, my brethren? If JESUS CHRIST, our great prophet, had bid you to do ſome far more difficult thing, would you

not have done it? Much more then ſhould you do it, when he only bids you deny yourſelves what would certainly hurt you if indulged in, and he will give you a crown of life.

But to illuſtrate this by another compariſon: In the 12th chapter of the *Acts*, we read, that "St. *Peter* was kept in priſon, and was ſleeping between two ſoldiers, bound with two chains: And behold an angel of the LORD came upon him, and ſmote *Peter* on the ſide, ſaying, ariſe up quickly: And his chains fell off from his hands." But had this great apoſtle, inſtead of riſing up quickly, and doing as the bleſſed angel commanded him, hugged his chains and begged that they might not be let fall from his hands, would not any one think that he was in love with ſlavery, and deſerved to be executed next morning? And does not the perſon who refuſes to deny himſelf, act as inconſiſtently, as this apoſtle would have done if he had neglected the means of his deliverance? For our ſouls, by nature, are in a ſpiritual dungeon, ſleeping and faſt bound between the world, the fleſh, and the devil, not with two but ten thouſand chains of luſts and corruptions. Now JESUS CHRIST, like St. *Peter*'s good angel, by the power of his goſpel comes and opens the priſon door, and bids us "deny ourſelves and follow him." But if we do not ariſe, gird up the loins of our mind and follow him, are we not in love with bondage, and do we not deſerve never to be delivered from it?

Indeed, I will not affirm that this doctrine of ſelf-denial appears in this juſt light to every one. No, I am ſenſible that to the natural man it is fooliſhneſs, and to the young convert an hard ſaying. But what ſays our Saviour? "If any man will do my will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of GOD, or whether I ſpeak of myſelf." This, my dear friends, is the beſt, the only way of conviction: Let us up and be doing; let us ariſe quickly, and deny ourſelves, and the LORD JESUS will remove theſe ſcales from the eyes of our minds, which now, like ſo many veils, hinder us from ſeeing clearly the reaſonableneſs, neceſſity, and inexpreſſible advantage of the doctrine that has been delivered. Let us but once thus ſhew ourſelves men, and then the ſpirit of GOD will move on the face of our ſouls, as he did once upon the face of the great deep; and cauſe them to emerge out of

that

that confuſed chaos, in which they are moſt certainly now involved, if we are ſtrangers and enemies to ſelf-denial and the croſs of CHRIST.

III. Proceed we therefore now to the third and laſt general thing propoſed, to offer ſome conſiderations, which may ſerve as ſo many motives to reconcile us to, and quicken us in, the practiſe of this duty of ſelf-denial.

1. And the firſt means I ſhall recommend to you, in order to reconcile you to this doctrine, is, to meditate frequently on the life of our bleſſed Lord and Maſter JESUS CHRIST. Follow him from his cradle to the croſs, and ſee what a ſelf-denying life he led! And ſhall not we drink of the cup that he drank of, and be baptized with the baptiſm that he was baptized with? Or think we, that JESUS CHRIST did and ſuffered every thing in order to have us excuſed and exempted from ſufferings? No, far be it from any ſincere chriſtian to judge after this manner: for St. *Peter* tells us, "He ſuffered for us, leaving us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps." Had CHRIST, indeed, like thoſe that ſat in *Moſes'* chair, laid heavy burthens of ſelf-denial upon us, (ſuppoſing they were heavy, which they are not) and refuſed to touch them himſelf with one of his fingers; we might have had ſome pretence to complain: But ſince he has enjoined us nothing, but what he firſt put in practiſe himſelf, thou art inexcuſable, O diſciple, whoever thou art, who wouldſt be above thy perſecuted ſelf-denying maſter: And thou art no good and faithful ſervant, who art unwilling to ſuffer and ſympathize with thy mortified, heavenly-minded LORD.

2. Next to the pattern of our bleſſed maſter, think often on the lives of the glorious company of the apoſtles, the goodly fellowſhip of the prophets, and the noble army of martyrs; who by a conſtant looking to the author and finiſher of our faith, have fought the good fight, and are gone before us to inherit the promiſes. View again and again, how holily, how ſelf-denyingly, how unblameably they lived: And if ſelf-denial was neceſſary for them, why not for us alſo? Are we not men of like paſſions with them? Do we not live in the ſame wicked world as they did? Have we not the ſame good ſpirit to aſſiſt, ſupport, and purify us, as they had?

and is not the ſame eternal inheritance reached out to us, as was to them? And if we have the ſame nature to change, the ſame wicked world to withſtand, the ſame good ſpirit to help, and the ſame eternal crown at the end; why ſhould not we lead the ſame lives as they did? Do we think they did works of ſupererogation? if not, why do not we do as they did? or why does your own church ſet apart feſtivals to commemorate the deaths and ſufferings of the ſaints, but in order to excite you to follow them as they did CHRIST.

3. *Thirdly*, Think often on the pains of hell; conſider, whether it is not better to cut off a right-hand or foot, and pull out a right-eye, if they offend us (or cauſe us to ſin) "rather than to be caſt into hell, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Think how many thouſands there are now reſerved with damned ſpirits in chains of darkneſs unto the judgment of the great day. And think withal, that this, this muſt be our caſe ſhortly, unleſs we are wiſe in time, deny ourſelves, and follow JESUS CHRIST. Think you, they now imagine JESUS CHRIST to be an hard maſter; or rather think you not, they would give ten thouſand times ten thouſand worlds, could they but return to life again, and take CHRIST's eaſy yoke upon them? And can we dwell with everlaſting burnings more than they? No, if we cannot bear this precept, deny yourſelves, take up your croſſes; how ſhall we bear the irrevocable ſentence, "Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" But I hope thoſe, amongſt whom I am now preaching the kingdom of GOD, are not ſo diſingenuous as to need to be driven to their duty by the terrors of the LORD, but rather deſire to be drawn by the cords of love.

Laſtly, Therefore, often meditate on the joys of heaven: think, think with what unſpeakable glory thoſe happy ſouls are now incircled, who when on earth were called to deny themſelves as well as we, and were not diſobedient to that call: Lift up your hearts frequently towards the manſions of eternal bliſs, and with an eye of faith, like *Stephen*, ſee the heavens opened, and the Son of man with his glorious retinue of departed ſaints, ſitting and ſolacing themſelves in eternal joys. Hark! methinks I hear them chanting forth their everlaſting *Hallelujahs*, and echoing triumphant ſongs of joy. And

do you not long, my brethren, to join this heavenly choir? do not your hearts burn within you? As the hart panteth after the water brooks, do not your ſouls ſo long after the bleſſed company of theſe ſons of GOD? Behold then a heavenly ladder reached down to you, by which you may climb to this holy hill. Let us believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and deny ourſelves! By this alone, every ſaint that ever lived aſcended into the joy of their LORD: And then, we, even we alſo ſhall ere long be lifted up into the ſame moſt bliſsful regions, there to enjoy an eternal reſt with the people of GOD, and join with them in ſinging doxologies and ſongs of praiſe, to the everlaſting, bleſſed, all-glorious, moſt adorable Trinity, for ever and ever.

Which GOD of his infinite mercy grant, &c.

SERMON XXX.

CHRIST'S Transfiguration.

LUKE ix. 28—36.

And it came to paſs about an eight days after theſe ſayings, he took Peter *and* John *and* James, *and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the faſhion of his countenance was altered, and his rayment was white and gliſtering. And behold, there talked with him two men, which were* Moſes *and* Elias: *who appeared in glory, and ſpake of his deceaſe, which he ſhould accompliſh at* Jeruſalem. *But* Peter *and they that were with him, were heavy with ſleep: and when they were awake, they ſaw his glory, and the two men that ſtood with him. And it came to paſs, as they departed from him,* Peter *ſaid unto* JESUS, *Maſter, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for* Moſes, *and one for* Elias: *not knowing what he ſaid. While he thus ſpake, there came a cloud and overſhadowed them, and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, ſaying, This is my beloved Son, hear him. And when the voice was paſt,* JESUS *was found alone; and they kept it cloſe, and told no man in thoſe days any of thoſe things which they had ſeen.*

WHEN the angel was ſent to the Redeemer's beloved diſciple *John*, we are told that the angel ſaid unto him, "Come up hither:" He was to be exalted, to be brought nearer heaven, that his mind might be better prepared for thoſe great manifeſtations, which an infinitely great

nd condeſcending GOD intended to vouchſafe him. And on eading the verſes that you have juſt now heard, when I alſo ee ſuch a great and ſerious aſſembly convened in the preſence of GOD, I think I muſt addreſs you, as the angel addreſſed *John*, and ſay unto you, "Come up hither;" leave your worldly thoughts, for a time forget the earth. And as it is the Lord's-day, a time in which we ought more particularly to think of heaven, I muſt deſire you to pray to GOD, that we may get up on *Piſgah*'s mount, and take a view of the promiſed land. It is true, indeed, eye hath not ſeen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of any man to conceive the great and good things, which GOD hath prepared for his people here; much leſs, thoſe infinitely greater and more glorious things, that he hath laid up for them that fear him, in the eternal world: but, bleſſed be GOD! though we are not yet in heaven, unleſs to be in CHRIST may properly be termed heaven, and then all real chriſtians are there already; yet, the bleſſed JESUS has been pleaſed to leave upon record ſome account of himſelf, of what happened to him in the days of his fleſh, and of ſome manifeſtations he was pleaſed to grant to a few of his diſciples; that from what happened to them here below, we may form ſome faint, though but a faint idea of that happineſs that awaits his people in his kingdom above. If any of you enquire, in what part of our LORD's life thoſe inſtances are recorded, I have an anſwer ready: One of theſe inſtances, and that a very remarkable one, is recorded in the verſes that I have now choſen for the ſubject of your meditation.

The verſes give us an account of what is generally called our LORD's *Tranſfiguration*; his being wonderfully changed, and his being wonderfully owned by his Father upon the mount. Some think that this was done upon a ſabbath-day; and the particular occaſion of our bleſſed LORD's condeſcending to let his ſervants have ſuch a ſight as this, we may gather from the 27th verſe. It ſeems our bleſſed LORD had been promiſing a great reward to thoſe who ſhould not be aſhamed of him: "Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words, of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he ſhall come in his own glory, and of his Father, and of the holy angels." In this threatening is implied, a reward to thoſe who

who ſhould not be aſhamed of him: "But, (adds he) I tell you of a truth, there be ſome ſtanding here, who ſhall not taſte of death, till they ſee the kingdom of GOD:" As much as to ſay, There will be a day, when I will come in the glory of my Father and of his holy angels; but I tell you there are ſome of my favourites; I tell you of a truth, though you may think it too good news, there are ſome of you that ſhall not taſte of death, till ye ſhall ſee the kingdom of GOD. Some divines think, that this promiſe has reference to our LORD's erecting a goſpel church; and if we take it in this ſenſe, it means that the Apoſtles, who were then preſent, ſome of them at leaſt, ſhould not die, till they ſaw Satan's kingdom in a great meaſure pulled down, and the Redeemer's goſpel-kingdom erected. Some think it has a peculiar reference to *John*, who it ſeems ſurvived all the other Apoſtles, and lived till CHRIST came; that is, till he came to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*. But it is the opinion of Mr. *Henry*, of Biſhop *Hall*, of *Burkit*, and others, who have written upon this paſſage, that our bleſſed LORD has a peculiar reference to the transfiguration upon the mount: "There be ſome of you here, that ſhall not taſte of death, till ye ſee my transfiguration upon the mount; till ye ſee ſome glorified ſaint come down from heaven and pay me a viſit, and conſequently ſee a little of that kingdom of GOD, which ye ſhall have a full ſight of, when ye come to glory." This ſeems to be the right interpretation. If you will look to the margin of your Bibles, you will ſee the parallel place in *Matthew*, where the account of our LORD's transfiguration is given, and there you will find it immediately follows upon this promiſe of our LORD.

Well, as CHRIST had told them, that they ſhould not taſte of death, till they had ſeen the kingdom of GOD, why the Evangeliſt, at the 28th verſe, tells us, "It came to paſs about an eight days after theſe ſayings, he took *Peter*, and *John*, and *James*, and went up into a mountain to pray." About an eight days; that is, as Biſhop *Hall* thinks, upon the ſabbath-day; or, according to ſome, the firſt day of the week, which was hereafter to be the chriſtian ſabbath; our bleſſed LORD takes *Peter*, *John*, and *James*: Why did not the LORD JESUS CHRIST take more of his diſciples? Why three,

and theſe three? And why three only? Our bleſſed LORD was pleaſed to take three and no more, to ſhow us that he is a ſovereign agent; to ſhow us, that though he loved all his diſciples, yet there are ſome to whom he is pleaſed to allow peculiar viſits. He loved *Peter*, and all the other diſciples; yet *John* was the diſciple that he peculiarly loved. And he took three rather than one, becauſe three were ſufficient to teſtify the truth of his being transfigured: "Out of the mouth of two or three witneſſes every word ſhall be eſtabliſhed." And he took no more than three, becauſe theſe three were enough. And he took theſe three, *Peter*, *John*, and *James*, in particular, becauſe theſe very perſons that were now to ſee CHRIST transfigured, were hereafter to ſee him agonizing in the garden, ſweating great drops of blood falling unto the ground. And had not theſe three diſciples ſeen CHRIST upon the mount, the ſeeing him afterwards in the garden, might have ſtaggered them exceedingly: they might have doubted whether it was poſſible for the Son of GOD to be in ſuch doleful circumſtances. Well, our LORD takes theſe three "up into a mountain." Why ſo? Becauſe CHRIST JESUS was to be like *Moſes*, who was taken up into a mountain, when GOD intended to deliver unto him the moral law: And our bleſſed LORD went up into a mountain, becauſe a mountain befriended devotion. When he had a mind to retire to pray to his Father, he went to ſuch places where he could be moſt ſecret, and give the greateſt vent to his heart. Thus we are told, that once when *Peter* prayed, it was upon the houſe-top. And if we have a mind to be near GOD, we ſhould chooſe ſuch places as are freeſt from oſtentation, and that moſt befriend our communion with GOD. And what doth CHRIST, when he got up into a mountain? We are told, he went up into a mountain "to pray." CHRIST had no corruption to confeſs, and he had but few wants of his own to be relieved; yet we hear of CHRIST being much in prayer; we hear of his going up to a mountain to pray; of his riſing up a great while before it was day to pray; and of his ſpending a whole night in prayer to GOD.

In the 29th verſe, you have an account of the effect of our LORD's praying: "As he prayed, the faſhion of his counte-

nance

nance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering." I would have you take notice, that our LORD was not changed in respect of his body, while he was going up to the mount, but when he got upon the mount, and while engaged in prayer. It is sufficient that way for our souls to be transformed: the time we are more particularly to expect the influences of GOD's Spirit, is, when we are engaged in prayer. There seems to be a very great propriety in our LORD's being transfigured or changed upon the mount. I hope I need inform none of you, that when *Moses* went up to the mount of GOD, GOD was pleased to speak to him face to face; and when he came down from the mount, the people of *Israel* observed that *Moses*'s face shone so, that he was obliged to have a veil put upon his face. Now the shining of *Moses*'s face, was a proof to the people, that *Moses* had been conversing with GOD. And *Moses* told the people, "That the LORD would raise up unto them a prophet like unto him, whom the people were to hear." GOD the Father, in order to give his Son (considering him as man) a testimony that he was a prophet, was pleased not only to let his face glitter or shine; but to show that he was a prophet far superior to *Moses*, he was pleased to let his garment be white and glistering, and "his countenance (as we are told by another Evangelist) did shine as the sun." What a change was here! What a sight! Methinks I see *Peter*, *James*, and *John* surprized: and, indeed, well might the Evangelist, considering what happened, usher in the following part of the story with the word *Behold*; "Behold, there talked with him two men, *Moses* and *Elias*: And in the 31st verse, you have an account of their dress, "They appeared in glory;" and of their discourse, "They spake of his decease which he should accomplish at *Jerusalem*."

"Behold, two men, which were *Moses* and *Elias*;" these were two very proper persons to come upon this embassy to the Son of GOD. *Moses* was the great lawgiver, *Elias* was the great restorer of the law: The body of *Moses* was hidden and never found, *Elias*'s body was translated immediately, and carried up in a fiery chariot to heaven: And it may be that this was done particularly, because these two were hereafter to have the honour of waiting upon the Son of GOD.

"They

" They appeared in glory;" that is, their bodies were now in that glorious habit, in which the bodies of believers are to be at the morning of the reſurrection. CHRIST was, as it were, now ſitting in his royal robes; and as it is uſual for ambaſſadors, when they are to be admitted into the king's preſence, on bringing a meſſage from one king to another, to appear in all their grandeur, to make the meſſage more ſolemn; ſo here, theſe heavenly meſſengers being to wait upon the LORD JESUS CHRIST, are inveſted as with royal dignity, they appeared in glory, and " they ſpake of his deceaſe which he ſhould accompliſh at *Jeruſalem*," they came to tell the Redeemer of his ſufferings, and of the place of his ſufferings, and to acquaint him, that his ſufferings, however great, however bitter, were to be *accompliſhed*; that there was to be an end put to them, as our LORD himſelf ſpeaks, " The things concerning me are to have an end." What other particulars they ſpoke to our LORD, we are not told. But what effect this had upon the diſciples, you may learn from the 32d verſe, " *Peter*, and they that were with him, were heavy with ſleep."

We are not to ſuppoſe, that *Peter*, *James* and *John*, were now aſleep in a literal ſenſe; no, if we compare this, with another paſſage of holy writ, I mean the account given us of *Daniel*'s being impreſſed and overcome, when he ſaw the angel of the LORD, you will find that this ſleep implies what we call a ſwoon. They were overcome with the ſight of the glory of CHRIST's garments, the gliſtering of his body, and the glory in *Moſes* and *Elias* appeared: theſe quite overcame them, ſunk them down, and, like the Queen of *Sheba*, when ſhe ſaw *Solomon*'s glory, they had no life in them. But they recovered themſelves: " when they were awake," that is, when they had recovered their ſtrength, when GOD had put ſtrength into them, as the angel put ſtrength into *Daniel*, " they ſaw his glory, and the two men that ſtood with him." And how do you think they gazed upon CHRIST? how may we ſuppoſe they fixed their eyes upon *Moſes* and *Elias*? *Peter*, who was always the firſt ſpeaker, out of the abundance of his heart, ſpoke upon this occaſion. Verſe 33. " And it came to paſs as they departed from him, *Peter* ſaid unto JESUS, Maſter, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for

for thee, and one for *Moſes*, and one for *Elias*, not knowing what he ſaid." *Peter*, when he had drank a little of CHRIST's new wine, ſpeaks like a perſon intoxicated; he was overpowered with the brightneſs of the manifeſtation. "Let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for *Moſes*, and one for *Elias*." It is well added, "not knowing what he ſaid." That ſhe ſhould cry out, "Maſter, it is good for us to be here," in ſuch good company, and in ſo glorious a condition, is no wonder; which of us all would not have been apt to have done the ſame? But to talk of building tabernacles, and one for CHRIST, and one for *Moſes*, and one for *Elias*, was ſaying ſomething for which *Peter* himſelf muſt ſtand reproved. Surely, *Peter*, thou waſt not quite awake! thou talkeſt like one in a dream: If thy LORD had taken thee at thy word, what a poor tabernacle wouldſt thou have had, in compariſon of that houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, in which thou haſt long ſince dwelt, now the earthly houſe of the tabernacle of thy body is diſſolved? What! build tabernacles below, and have the crown, before thou haſt borne the croſs? O *Peter*, *Peter!* "Maſter, ſpare thyſelf," ſticks too too cloſely to thee: And why ſo ſelfiſh, *Peter?* Careſt thou not for thy fellow diſciples that are below, who came not up with thee to the mount? careſt thou not for the precious ſouls, that are as ſheep having no ſhepherd, and muſt periſh for ever, unleſs thy Maſter deſcends from the mount to teach, and to die for them? wouldſt thou thus eat thy ſpiritual morſels alone? Beſides, if thou art for building tabernacles, why muſt there be three of them, one for CHRIST, and one for *Moſes*, and one for *Elias?* are CHRIST and the prophets divided? do they not ſweetly harmonize and agree in one? did they not propheſy concerning the ſufferings of thy LORD, as well as of the glory that ſhould follow? Alas, how unlike is their converſation to thine? *Moſes* and *Elias* came down to talk of ſuffering, and thou art dreaming of building I know not what tabernacles. Surely, *Peter*, thou art ſo high upon the mount, that thy head runs giddy.

However, in the midſt of theſe infirmities, there was ſomething that beſpoke the honeſty and integrity of his heart. Though he knew not very well what he ſaid, yet he was not ſo ſtupid as his pretended ſucceſſor at *Rome*. He does not fall down

down and worſhip theſe two departed ſaints, neither do I hear him ſay to either, *Ora pro nobis*; he had not ſo learnt CHRIST; no, he applies himſelf directly to the head, "he ſaid unto JESUS, Maſter, it is good for us to be here." And though he was for building, yet he would not build without his Maſter's leave. "Maſter, let us build," or, as St. *Mark* words it, "wilt thou that we build three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for *Moſes*, and one for *Elias?*" I do not hear him add, and one for *James*, and one for *John*, and one for *Peter*. No, he would willingly ſtay out with them upon the mount, though it was in the cold and dark night, ſo that CHRIST and his heavenly attendants were taken care of. The ſweetneſs of ſuch a heavenly viſion, would more than compenſate for any bodily ſuffering that might be the conſequence of their longer abode there: nay farther, he does not deſire that either CHRIST, or *Moſes*, or *Elias*, ſhould have any trouble in building; neither does he ſay, let my curates, *James* and *John*, build, whilſt I ſit idle and lord it over my brethren; but he ſays, "let us build;" he will work as hard, if not harder than either of them, and deſire to be diſtinguiſhed only by his activity, enduring hardneſs, and his zeal to promote the welfare of their common LORD and Maſter.

Doubtleſs, *Peter* had read how the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle, and the temple of old; and now JESUS is tranſfigured, and *Moſes* and *Elias* appear in glory, he thinks it right that new tabernacles ſhall be erected for them. Such a mixture of nature and grace, of ſhort-ſightedneſs and infirmity, is there in the moſt ardent and well-meant zeal of the very beſt of men, when neareſt the throne of grace, or even upon the mount with GOD. Perfection in any grace muſt be looked for, or expected, only among the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect in heaven. Thoſe who talk of any ſuch thing on earth, like *Peter*, they know not what they ſay.

But how came *Peter* ſo readily to diſtinguiſh which was *Moſes*, and which was *Elias?* He ſeems to ſpeak without the leaſt heſitation, "Let us build three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for *Moſes*, and one for *Elias*," as though he was very well acquainted with them, whereas they had both been dead, long, long before *Peter* was born. Was there, do you imagine, any thing diſtinguiſhing in their apparel? or any thing in their converſation

converſation that diſcovered them? or rather, did he not know them here on the mount, as we may from hence infer, that departed ſaints do, and will know each other in heaven, even by intuition and immediate revelation? But alas! how tranſient are our views of heaven, during our ſojourning here on earth: Verſe 34. "Whilſt he thus ſpake," whilſt *Peter* was talking of building tabernacles, whilſt he was ſaying, "it is good for us to be here," whilſt he was dreaming that his mountain was ſo ſtrong that it never could be moved, "there came a cloud and overſhadowed them." St. *Matthew* obſerves, it was a bright cloud, not dark like that on mount *Sinai*, but bright, becauſe the goſpel opens to us a far more bright diſpenſation than that of the law. This overſhadowed, and thereby not only filled them with an holy awe, but alſo ſcreened them, in ſome meaſure, from the brightneſs of that glory with which they were now ſurrounded, and which otherwiſe would have been inſupportable. This cloud was like the veil thrown on the face of *Moſes*, and prepared them for the voice which they were ſoon to hear coming out of it. I am not much ſurprized at being informed by St. *Matthew*, that "they feared as they entered into the cloud, or by St. *Mark*, that "they were ſore afraid." For ſince the fall, there is ſuch a conſciouſneſs in us all of deſerved wrath, that we cannot help fearing when we enter into a cloud, even though JESUS CHRIST himſelf be in the midſt of it. Ah *Peter*, where is thy talk of building tabernacles now? is thy ſtrong mountain ſo quickly removed? what, come down ſo ſoon? why do we not now hear thee ſaying, "It is good for us to be here?" Alas! he and his fellow diſciples are quite ſtruck dumb; ſee how they tremble, and, like *Moſes* upon another occaſion, exceedingly quake and fear. But how quickly are thoſe fears diſpelled, how ſoon is the tumult of their minds huſhed and calmed, with that ſoul-reviving voice that came from the excellent glory, verſe 35, "This is my beloved Son, hear him."

St. *Mark* and St. *Matthew* add "in whom I am well pleaſed." The ſame teſtimony that GOD the Father gave to the bleſſed JESUS at his baptiſm, before he entered upon his temptation, is now repeated, in order to ſtrengthen and prepare him for his impending agony in the garden. Probably, it was a ſmall ſtill though articulate voice, attended neither

ther with thunder nor lightning, nor the ſound of a trumpet, but, agreeable to the bleſſed news which it contained, uſhered in with tokens of unſpeakable complacency and love. GOD the Father, hereby gives *Moſes* and *Elias* a ſolemn diſcharge, as though they were ſent from heaven on purpoſe to give up their commiſſion to their rightful LORD, and like the morning ſtar, diſappear when the Sun of Righteouſneſs himſelf ariſes to bring in a goſpel day. "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." But the emphaſis upon the word *this*; this Son of Man, this JESUS, whom you are ſhortly to ſee in a bloody ſweat, blindfolded, ſpit upon, buffeted, ſcourged, and at length hanging upon a tree, I am not aſhamed to own to be my Son, my only begotten Son, who was with me before the heavens were made, or the foundations of the earth were laid; my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed, in whom my ſoul delighteth, and whom I do by theſe preſents, publicly conſtitute and appoint to be the king, prieſt, and prophet of the church. "Hear ye Him." No longer look to *Moſes* or *Elias*, no longer expect to be ſaved by the works of the law; but by the preaching and application of the ever-bleſſed goſpel. Hear ye him, ſo as to believe on, love, ſerve, obey, and, if needs be, to die and lay down your very lives for him. "Hear him;" hear what he hath to ſay, for he comes with a commiſſion from above. Hear his doctrine; hear him, ſo as to obey him; hear him, ſo as to put in practice his precepts, and copy after his good example.

In the 36th verſe, we have the cloſe of this heavenly feaſt; "When the voice was paſt, JESUS was found alone; and they kept it cloſe, and told no man in thoſe days, any of thoſe things which they had ſeen." If we compare this, with the account which the other Evangeliſts give of our bleſſed LORD's transfiguration, you will find this was done by CHRIST's order: *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, would otherwiſe have gone down and told the whole world, that they had ſeen the LORD CHRIST upon the mount of transfiguration; but our LORD ordered them to keep it ſilent. Why ſo? If they had gone down from the mount, and told it to the other diſciples, it might have raiſed ill blood in the others; they might have ſaid, Why did our Maſter ſingle out *Peter*, *James*, and *John*? Why might not we have had the privilege of

going up to the mount as well as they? Had they ſaid, that their LORD was transfigured, people would not have believed them; they would have thought, that *Peter*, *James*, and *John* were only enthuſiaſts; but if they kept it till after his reſurrection, and he had broken the gates of death, for them then to ſay, that they ſaw him upon the mount transfigured, would corroborate the evidence.

I have thus paraphraſed the words for your better underſtanding the account the Evangeliſt gives of our bleſſed LORD's transfiguration; but I have not yet done; I have been ſpeaking to your heads; the practical part is yet to come. O that GOD may reach your hearts! And though, according to order, I ought to begin with the practical inferences that might be drawn from the firſt part; yet, I think it beſt to ſhow you, who are the people of GOD, eſpecially you young converts, that have honeſty, but not much prudence, what inſtructions our LORD would here have you to learn.

"When the voice was paſt, JESUS was found alone, and they kept it cloſe, and told no man in thoſe days any of thoſe things which they had ſeen." There is nothing more common, when GOD vouchſafes communications to a poor ſoul, than for the perſon that enjoys them, to go and tell all that he has ſeen and felt, and often at improper ſeaſons and to improper perſons. I remember that Mr. *Henry* obſerves, "*Joſeph* had more honeſty than he had policy, or elſe he would never have told his brethren of his dreams." Young chriſtians are too apt to blunder thus: I am ſure it is a fault of which I have been exceedingly guilty, ſpeaking of things which, perhaps, had better been concealed; which is a fault GOD's people are too apt to fall into. Though it is good for thoſe that have ſeen CHRIST, and that have felt his love, to tell others what GOD hath done for their ſouls; yet, however you may think of it now, when you come down from the mount, and know yourſelves a little, ye will find reaſon often to hold your tongue. Young chriſtians are like children, to whom if you give a little money in their pocket, they cannot be quiet till they have ſpent it upon ſomething or other: young chriſtians, when they get a little of GOD, are ready to talk too much of it. They ſhould therefore beware, and know when to ſpeak, and when to be ſilent.

But

But, my dear friends, did our LORD JESUS CHRIST take *Peter*, *James*, and *John* into a mountain to pray? Are any of you fathers, mothers, maſters and miſtreſſes of families? Learn then from hence to take your children, your ſervants, and thoſe that belong to you, from the world, at certain times, and not only pray for them, but pray with them. If CHRIST did thus, who had few wants of his own to be ſupplied, and nothing to confeſs and lament over; if CHRIST was ſuch a lover of prayer, ſurely, you and I, who have ſo many wants to be ſupplied, ſo many corruptions to mourn over; you and I ſhould ſpend much time in prayer. I do not ſay that you are to lock yourſelves up in your cloſets, and not mind your ſhops or farms, or worldly buſineſs; I only ſay, that you ſhould take care to huſband all your time: and if you are GOD's children, you will frequently retire from the world, and ſeek a viſit from your GOD.

Was the LORD JESUS transformed or transfigured, while he was praying? Learn hence, to be much in ſpiritual prayer. The way to have the ſoul transformed, changed into, and made like unto GOD, is frequently to converſe with GOD. We ſay, a man is as his company. Perſons by converſing together, frequently catch each others tempers: and if you have a mind to imbibe the divine temper, pray much. And as CHRIST's garments became white and gliſtering, ſo ſhall your ſouls get a little of GOD's light to ſhine upon them.

Did *Moſes* and *Elias* appear in glory? Are there any old ſaints here? I doubt not but there are a conſiderable number. And are any of you afraid of death? Do any of you carry about with you a body that weighs down your immortal ſoul? I am ſure a poor creature is preaching to you, that every day drags a crazy load along. But come, believers, come, ye children of GOD, come, ye aged decrepid ſaints, come and trample upon that monſter death. As thou goeſt over yonder church-yard, do as I know an old excellent chriſtian in *Maryland* did; go, ſit upon the grave, and meditate on thine own diſſolution. Thou mayeſt, perhaps, have a natural fear of dying: the body and the ſoul do not care to part without a little ſympathy and a groan; but O look yonder, look up to heaven, ſee there thy JESUS, thy Redeemer, and learn, that thy body is to be faſhioned here-

after like unto CHRIST's moſt glorious body; that poor body which is now ſubject to gout and gravel, and that thou canſt ſcarce drag along; that poor body, which hinders thee ſo much in the ſpiritual life, will ere long hinder thee no more: it ſhall be put into the grave; but though it be ſown in corruption, it ſhall be raiſed in incorruption; though it is ſown in diſhonour, it ſhall be raiſed again in glory. This conſideration made bleſſed *Paul* to cry out, "O death, where is thy ſting! O grave, where is thy victory!" Thy ſoul and body ſhall be united together again, and thou ſhalt be "for ever with the LORD." Thoſe knees of thine, which perhaps are hard by kneeling in prayer; that tongne of thine, which hath ſung hymns to CHRIST; thoſe hands of thine, which have wrought for GOD; thoſe feet, which have ran to CHRIST's ordinances; ſhall all, in the twinkling of an eye, be changed; and thou ſhalt be able to ſtand under an exceeding and an eternal weight of glory. Come then, ye believers in CHRIST, look beyond the grave; come, ye dear children of GOD, and however weak and ſickly ye are now, ſay, Bleſſed be GOD, I ſhall ſoon have a body ſtrong, full of vigour and of glory.

But as this ſpeaks comfort to ſaints, it ſpeaks terror to ſinners, to all perſons that live and die out of CHRIST. It is the opinion of Archbiſhop *Uſher*, that as the bodies of the ſaints ſhall be glorified, ſo the bodies of the damned ſhall be deformed. And if this be true, alas! what a poor figure will the fine ladies cut, who die without a CHRIST! What a poor figure will the fine gentleman cut in the morning of the reſurrection, that now dreſſes up his body, and at the ſame time neglects to ſecure an intereſt in CHRIST and eternal happineſs! It is the opinion, likewiſe, of Archbiſhop *Uſher*, that damned ſouls will loſe all the good tempers they had here; ſo that though GOD gave unregenerate people a conſtitutional meekneſs, good nature, and courage, for the benefit of the commonwealth; yet, the uſe of theſe things being over, and they having died without CHRIST, and it being impoſſible there will be an appearance of good in hell, their good tempers will be for ever loſt. If this be ſo, it is an awful conſideration; and I think perſons who love their bodies, ſhould alſo hence take care to ſecure the welfare of their ſouls.

Did

Did *Peter* know which was *Moſes* and which *Elias?* Then I think, and GOD be praiſed for it, it is plain from this and other paſſages of ſcripture, that we ſhall know one another when we come to heaven. *Dives* knew *Lazarus:* "Father *Abraham*, ſend *Lazarus*:" And we are told, "he ſaw *Lazarus* ſitting in *Abraham*'s boſom." *Adam* knew his wife *Eve*; though caſt into a deep ſleep when GOD made her out of his rib, yet, by a kind of intuition, he ſays, "This is bone of my bone, and fleſh of my fleſh." And it is on this account, that the Apoſtle, ſpeaking to the *Philippians*, ſays, "Ye are my joy and crown of rejoicing, in the day of the LORD." What comfort will this be to a ſpiritual father! Says one, Here is the man, O LORD JESUS, that brought my ſoul to taſte of thy love; ſays another, This is the man, that at ſuch a time, and with ſuch words, ſtruck my heart: thou, O LORD, knoweſt it. Then the ſpiritual father will rejoice over his children. You that have met and have prayed together, ſighed and ſympathized together, and told your temptations to one another, ſhall be for ever with the LORD and with each other. There we ſhall ſee *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* ſitting, with all the redeemed company; and we ſhall know the names of every one mentioned in the book of GOD. O bleſſed proſpect! O bleſſed time! Who that thinks of this, of ſeeing the Lamb ſitting upon the throne, with all GOD's people about him, but muſt deſire to go to heaven, and be for ever, for ever with the LORD. And if there is ſuch comfort for believers to know one another in heaven, with what comfort may any of you, that have loſt fathers, mothers, or friends, think of them: we are parted for a little while, but we ſhall ſee them again. My father died in CHRIST, my mother died in the LORD, my huſband, my wife, was a follower of JESUS; I ſhall ſee them, though not now; I ſhall go to them, but they ſhall not return to me! This may keep you from ſorrowing as perſons without hope; and keep you from being ſo cruel, as to wiſh them to come down to this evil world.

But O what a dreadful conſideration is this for damned ſouls! I believe, that as glorified ſpirits will know one another, ſo will damned ſouls know one another too. And as the company of the bleſſed increaſes the happineſs of heaven, ſo

the company of the damned will increaſe their torments. What made *Dives* to put up that petition? "I have five brethren; ſend ſomebody to my father's houſe to teſtify unto them, leſt they alſo come into this place of torment." One would imagine at firſt reading, that hell had made *Dives* charitable, and that though he was ill natured on earth, yet he had acquired ſome good nature in hell. No, no, there is not a ſpark of good nature in the place of torment. But *Dives* knew, if his five brethren came there, they might ſay, We may thank you, next to an evil heart, for coming hither; you made us drink healths, till we were drunk; you taught us to game, to curſe, to ſwear, &c. He knew very well, that his five brethren being brought to hell by his example, hell would be heated five times hotter to torment his ſoul. One will cry out, Curſed be the day that ever I was companion with ſuch an one in ſin; curſed be the day that ever we hearkened to one another's advice, and were allured by each others example to ſin againſt GOD.

But did a cloud overſhadow *Peter*, *James*, and *John*? were heavenly and divine viſits here but ſhort? Then wonder not, ye people of GOD, if ye are upon the mount one hour, and down in the valley of the ſhadow of death the next. There is nothing in the world more common, after you have been in a good frame, than for a cloud to overſhadow you. We generally ſay, "It is good to be here," and often make a CHRIST of our graces; and therefore the LORD ſends a cloud to overſhadow us. But never fear; GOD ſhall ſpeak to you out of the cloud; GOD will reveal himſelf to you; this cloud ſhall ſoon be gone; ere long we ſhall be in heaven, and in that glory where no cloud can poſſibly reach us.

I can now only mention one thing more, and that is, Did the Father ſay, "This is my beloved Son, hear him?" then let every one of our hearts echo to this teſtimony given of CHRIST, "This is my beloved Saviour." Did GOD ſo love the world, as to ſend his only begotten Son, his well beloved Son to preach to us? then, my dear friends, HEAR HIM. What GOD ſaid ſeventeen hundred years ago, immediately by a voice from heaven, concerning his Son upon the mount, that ſame thing GOD ſays to you immediately by his word, "Hear him." If ye never heard him before, hear him now.

Hear

Hear him ſo as to take him to be your prophet, prieſt, and your king; hear him, ſo as to take him to be your GOD and your all. Hear him to-day, ye youth, while it is called to-day; hear him now, leſt GOD ſhould cut you off before you have another invitation to hear him; hear him while he cries, "Come unto me;" hear him while he opens his hand and his heart; hear him while he knocks at the door of your ſouls, leſt you ſhould hear him ſaying, "Depart, depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Hear him, ye old and grey-headed, hear him, ye that have one foot in the grave; hear him, I ſay; and if ye are dull of hearing, beg of GOD to open the ears of your hearts, and your blind eyes; beg of GOD that you may have an enlarged and a believing heart, and that ye may know what the LORD GOD ſaith concerning you. GOD will reſent it, he will avenge himſelf on his adverſaries, if you do not hear a bleſſed Saviour. He is GOD's ſon, he is GOD's beloved ſon; he came upon a great errand, even to ſhed his precious blood for ſinners; he came to cleanſe you from all ſin, and to ſave you with an everlaſting ſalvation. Ye who have heard him, hear him again; ſtill go on, believe in and obey him, and by-and-by you ſhall hear him ſaying, "Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." May GOD grant it to you all, for the LORD JESUS CHRIST's ſake. *Amen*, and *Amen*.

SERMON XXXI.

The Care of the Soul urged as the one thing needful.

LUKE X. 42.

But one thing is needful.

IT was the amiable character of our bleſſed Redeemer, that "he went about doing good," this great motive, which animated all his actions, brought him to the houſe of his friend *Lazarus*, at *Bethany*, and directed his behaviour there. Though it was a ſeaſon of receſs from public labour, our LORD brought the ſentiments and the pious cares of a preacher of righteouſneſs into the parlour of a friend; and there his doctrine dropped as the rain, and diſtilled as the dew, on the little happy circle that were then ſurrounding him. *Mary*, the ſiſter of *Lazarus*, with great delight made one amongſt them; ſhe ſeated herſelf at the feet of JESUS, in the poſture of an humble diſciple; and we have a great deal of reaſon to believe, that *Martha*, his other ſiſter, would gladly have been with her there; but domeſtic cares preſſed hard upon her, and "ſhe was cumbered with much ſerving," being, perhaps, too ſolicitous to prepare a ſumptuous entertainment for her heavenly maſter and the train that attended him. Happy are they, who in a crowd of buſineſs do not loſe ſomething of the ſpirituality of their minds, and of the compoſure and ſweetneſs of their tempers. This good woman comes to our LORD with too impatient a complaint; inſinuating ſome little reflection, not only on *Mary*, but on himſelf too. "LORD, doſt thou not care that my ſiſter hath left me to ſerve alone? Bid her, therefore, that ſhe help me." Our LORD, willing to take all opportunities of ſuggeſting uſeful thoughts, anſwers

ſwers her in theſe words, of which the text is a part, "*Martha, Martha*, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful; and *Mary* has choſen that good part, which ſhall not be taken away from her." Alas, *Martha!* the concerns of the ſoul are of ſo much greater importance than thoſe of the body, that I cannot blame your ſiſter on this occaſion: I rather recommend her to your imitation, and caution you, and all my other friends, to be much on your guard, that in the midſt of your worldly cares, you do not loſe ſight of what much better deſerves your attention.

I ſhall conſider theſe words, "One thing is needful," as a kind of aphoriſm, or wiſe and weighty ſentence, which dropped from the mouth of our bleſſed Redeemer, and is evidently worthy of our moſt ſerious regard. I ſhall,

I. Conſider what we are to underſtand by "The one thing" here ſpoken of.

II. Shew you what is intended, when it is ſaid to be the one thing *needful.*

III. I will ſhew how juſtly it may be ſo repreſented, or prove that it is, indeed, the one thing needful. And then conclude with ſome reflections.

My friends, the words which are now before us, are to this day, as true, as they were ſeventeen hundred years ago. Set your hearts to attend to them. O that you may, by divine grace, be awakened to hear them with a due regard, and be ſo impreſſed with the plain and ſerious things which are now to be ſpoken, as you probably would, if I were ſpeaking by your dying beds, and you had the near and lively view of eternity!

Firſt, I am to conſider, what we are to underſtand by the "one thing needful."

Now in a few words, it is the "*Care of the ſoul*," oppoſed, as you ſee in the text, to the care, the exceſſive care of the body; to which *Martha* was gently admoniſhed by our LORD. This is a general anſwer, and it comprehends a variety of important particulars, which is the buſineſs of our miniſtry often to open to you at large: The care of the ſoul, implies a

readineſs to hear the words of CHRIST, to ſeat ourſelves with *Mary* at his feet, and to receive both the law and the goſpel from his mouth. It ſuppoſes, that we learn from this divine teacher the worth of our ſouls, their danger, and their remedy; and that we become above all things ſolicitous about their eternal ſalvation. That, heartily repenting of all our ſins, and cordially believing the everlaſting goſpel, we receive the LORD JESUS CHRIST for righteouſneſs and life, reſting our ſouls on the value of his atonement, and the efficacy of his grace. It imports, the ſincere dedication of ourſelves to the ſervice of GOD, and a faithful adherence to it, notwithſtanding all oppoſitions ariſing from inward corruptions, or outward temptations; and a reſolute perſeverance in the way of goſpel dependance, 'till we receive the end of our faith in our compleat ſalvation. This is the "one thing needful," repreſented indeed in various ſcriptures by various names. Sometimes it is called "Regeneration," or "the new creature," becauſe it is the bleſſed work of GOD's efficacious grace. Sometimes the "Fear of GOD," and ſometimes "his love, and the keeping his commandments;" and very frequently in the new teſtament it is called "faith," or "receiving CHRIST, and believing on him," which therefore is repreſented as the "great work of GOD," *John* vi. 29. the great thing which GOD in his glorious goſpel requires, as well as by his ſpirit produces in us: each of theſe, if rightly underſtood and explained, comprehends all that I have ſaid on this head. On the whole, we may ſay, that, as the body is one, though it has many members, and the ſoul is one, though it has many faculties, ſo in the preſent caſe, this real vital religion is "one thing," one ſacred principle of divine life, bringing us to attend to the care of our ſouls, as of our greateſt treaſure. It is one thing, notwithſtanding all the variety of views in which it may be conſidered, and of characters under which it may be deſcribed. I proceed,

Secondly, To conſider what may be intended in the repreſentation which is here made of it, as the "one thing *needful*."

Now I think it naturally includes theſe three particulars: it is a matter of univerſal concern; of the higheſt importance; and

and of ſo comprehenſive a nature, that every thing which is truly worthy of our regard, may be conſidered as included in, or ſubſervient to it. Let me a little illuſtrate each of theſe particulars.

1. The care of the ſoul may be called the "one thing needful," as it is matter of univerſal concern.

Our LORD, you ſee, ſpeaks of it as needful in the general. He ſays not, for this or that particular perſon; or for thoſe of ſuch an age, ſtation, or circumſtance in life, but needful for all. And indeed, when diſcourſing on ſuch a ſubject, one might properly introduce it with thoſe ſolemn words of the pſalmiſt, "Give ear, all ye people, hear, all ye inhabitants of the earth, both high and low, rich and poor, together," *Pſalm* xlix. 1, 2. For it is the concern of all, from the king that ſits upon the throne, to the ſervant that grindeth at the mill, or the beggar that lieth upon the dunghill. It is needful for us that are *miniſters*, for our own ſalvation is concerned: and woe, inſupportable woe will be to our ſouls, if we think it enough to recommend it to others, and to talk of it in a warm, or an awful manner, in public aſſemblies, or in our private converſe, while it does not penetrate our hearts, as our own greateſt care. Our caſe will then be like that of the *Iſraelitiſh* lord in *Samaria*, 2 *Kings* vii. 2. who was employed to diſtribute the corn when the ſiege was raiſed; though we ſee it with our eyes, and diſpenſe it with our hands, we ſhall ourſelves die miſerably, without taſting the bleſſings we impart. It is needful to all you that are our *hearers*, without the exception of one ſingle perſon. It is needful to you that are *rich*, though it may on ſome accounts be peculiarly difficult for you; even as difficult, comparatively ſpeaking, as for a "Camel to go through the eye of a needle," *Mat.* xix. 24. yet if it be neglected, you are poor in the midſt of all your wealth, and miſerable in all your abundance; a wretch ſtarving for hunger, in a magnificent palace and a rich dreſs, would be leſs the object of compaſſion than you. It is needful for you that are *poor*; though you are diſtreſſed with ſo many anxious cares, "what you ſhall eat, and what you ſhall drink, and wherewithal you ſhall be cloathed," *Mat.* vi. 31. The nature that makes you capable of ſuch anxieties as theſe, argues your much greater concern in the "bread which endures

dures to eternal life," *John* vi. 27. than in that by which this mortal body muſt be ſupported. It is needful for you that are *advanced in years*; though your ſtrength be impaired ſo that the "graſhopper is a burthen," *Eccl.* xii. 5. and though you have by your long continuance in ſin rendered this great work ſo hard, that were it leſs important, one would in pity let you alone without reminding you of it: yet, late as it is, it muſt be done, or your hoary heads will be brought down to the grave with wrath, and ſink under a curſe aggravated by every year and by every day of your lives. It is needful to you that are *young*, though ſolicited by ſo many gay vanities, to neglect it, though it may be repreſented as an unſeaſonable care at preſent, yet I repeat it, it is needful to you; immediately needful, unleſs you who walk ſo frequently over the duſt of your brethren and companions, that died in the bloom and vigour of their days, have made ſome ſecret covenant with the grave for yourſelves, and found out ſome wonderful method, hitherto unknown, of ſecuring this precarious life, and of anſwering for days and months to come, while others cannot anſwer for one ſingle moment.

2. The care of the ſoul is "a matter of the higheſt importance;" beyond any thing which can be brought into compariſon with it.

As *Solomon* ſays of wiſdom, that "it is more precious than rubies, and that all things which can be deſired are not to be compared with her," *Prov.* iii. 15. So I may properly ſay of this great and moſt important branch of wiſdom; whatever can be laid in the balance with it, will be found altogether lighter than vanity. This is ſtrongly implied when it is ſaid in the text, "one thing is needful;" one thing, and *one thing alone* is ſo. Juſt as the bleſſed GOD is ſaid to be "only wiſe," 1 *Tim.* i. 17. and "only holy," *Rev.* xv. 4. becauſe the wiſdom and holineſs of angels and men is as nothing, when compared with his. What ſeems moſt great and moſt important in life, what kings and ſenates, what the wiſeſt and greateſt of this world are employing their time, their councils, their pens, their labours upon, are trifles, when compared with this one thing. A man may ſubſiſt, he may in ſome conſiderable meaſure be happy, without learning, without riches, without titles, without health,

without

without liberty, without friends, nay, though "the life be more than meat, and the body than raiment," *Matth.* vi. 25. yet may he be happy, unſpeakably happy, without the body itſelf. But he cannot be ſo, in the neglect of the one thing needful. I muſt therefore beſpeak your regard to it in the words of *Moſes*, "it is not a light thing, but it is your life," *Deut.* xxxii. 47.

3. The care of the ſoul is of ſo comprehenſive a nature, that "every thing truly worthy of our regard may be conſidered as included in it, or ſubſervient to it.

As *David* obſerves, that "the commandment of GOD is exceeding broad," *Pſalm* cxix. 96. ſo we may ſay of this one thing needful; or as *Solomon* very juſtly and emphatically expreſſes it, "to fear GOD and to keep his commandments is the whole duty of man," *Eccl.* xii. 13. his whole duty, and his whole intereſt; and every thing which is wiſe and rational does in its proper place and connection make a part of it. We ſhould judge very ill concerning the nature of this care, if we imagined, that it conſiſted merely in acts of devotion, or religious contemplation; it comprehends all the lovely and harmonious band of ſocial and humane virtues. It requires a care of ſociety, a care of our bodies, and of our temporal concerns; but then all is to be regulated, directed, and animated by proper regards to GOD, CHRIST, and immortality. Our food and our reſt, our trades and our labours, are to be attended to, and all the offices of humanity performed in obedience to the will of GOD, for the glory of CHRIST, and in a view to improving the mind in a growing meetneſs for a ſtate of compleat perfection. Name any thing which has no reference at all to this, and you name a worthleſs trifle, however it may be gilded to allure the eye, or however it may be ſweetened to gratify the taſte. Name a thing, which, inſtead of thus improving the ſoul, has a tendency to debaſe and pollute, to enſlave and endanger it, and you name what is moſt unprofitable and miſchievous, be the wages of iniquity ever ſo great; moſt foul and deformed, be it in the eyes of men ever ſo honourable, or in their cuſtoms ever ſo faſhionable. Thus I have endeavoured to ſhew you what we may ſuppoſe implied in this expreſſion of "one thing being needful." I am now,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, To ſhew you with how much propriety the care of the ſoul may be repreſented under this character, as the one thing needful, or as a matter of univerſal and moſt ſerious concern, to which every thing elſe is to be conſidered as ſubſervient, if at all worthy of our care and purſuit.

There let me appeal to the ſentiments of thoſe who muſt be allowed moſt capable of judging, and to the evident reaſon of the caſe itſelf, as it muſt appear to every unprejudiced mind.

1. Let me argue "from the opinions of thoſe who muſt be allowed moſt capable of judging in ſuch an affair," and we ſhall quickly ſee that the care of the ſoul appears to them, the one thing needful.

Is the judgment of the bleſſed GOD "according to truth," how evidently and how ſolemnly is that judgment declared? I will not ſay merely in this or the other particular paſſage of his word, but in the whole ſeries of his revelations to the children of men, and the whole tenor of his addreſſes to them. Is not this the language of all, from the early days of *Job* and *Moſes* to the concluſion of the canon of ſcripture. *Job* xxviii. 21, 23, 28. "If wiſdom be hid from the eyes of all the living, ſurely GOD underſtandeth the way thereof, he knoweth the place thereof;" and if he does, it is plainly pointed out, for "unto man he ſtill ſaith, behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wiſdom, and to depart from evil, that is underſtanding." By *Moſes* he declared to the *Iſraelites*, that "to do the commandments of the LORD would be their wiſdom and their underſtanding in the ſight of the nations, who ſhould hear his ſtatutes, and ſay, ſurely this is a wiſe and an underſtanding people," *Deut.* iv. 6. When he had raiſed up one man on the throne of *Iſrael*, with the character of the wiſeſt that ever lived upon the face of the earth, he choſe to make him eminently a teacher of this great truth. And though now all that he ſpoke on the curious and leſs concerning ſubjects of natural philoſophy is loſt, "though he ſpoke of trees from the cedar to the hyſſop, and of beaſts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fiſhes," 1 *Kings* iv. 33. that ſaying is preſerved in which he teſtifies, that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wiſdom," *Prov.* i. 7, 9, 10. and thoſe *Proverbs*, in almoſt every line of which,

which, they who neglect GOD and their own ſouls, are ſpoken of as fools, as if that were the moſt proper ſignification of the word, while the religious alone are honoured with the title of wiſe. But in this reſpect, as atteſting this truth in the name of GOD and in his own, "a greater than *Solomon* is here."

For if we inquire what it was that our LORD JESUS CHRIST judged to be the one thing needful, the words of the text contain as full an anſwer as can be imagined; and the ſenſe of them is repeated in a very lively and emphatical manner, in that remarkable paſſage wherein our LORD not only declares his own judgment, but ſeems to appeal to the conſciences of all, as obliged by their own ſecret convictions to ſubſcribe to the truth of it. "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul; or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?" *Matth.* xvi. 26. If it were once loſt, what would he not be willing to give to redeem it? But it depends not on the words of CHRIST alone. Let his actions, his ſufferings, his blood, his death, ſpeak what a value he ſet on the ſouls of men. Is it to be imagined, that he would have relinquiſhed heaven, have dwelt upon earth, have laboured by night and by day, and at laſt have expired on the croſs, for a matter of light importance? Or can we think that he, in whom "dwell all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, and all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily," *Coloſſ.* ii. 3, 9. was miſtaken in judgment ſo deliberately formed, and ſo ſolemnly declared?

If after this, there were room to mention human judgment and teſtimonies, how eaſy would it be to produce a cloud of witneſſes in ſuch a cauſe, and to ſhew that the wiſeſt and beſt of men in all ages of the world have agreed in this point, that amidſt all the diverſities of opinion and profeſſion, which ſucceeding generations have produced, this has been the unanimous judgment, this the common and moſt ſolicitous care of thoſe whoſe characters are moſt truly valuable, to ſecure the ſalvation of their own ſouls, and to promote the ſalvation of others.

And let me beſeech you ſeriouſly to reflect, what are the characters of thoſe who have taken the liberty, moſt boldly and freely to declare their judgment on the contrary ſide?

The number of ſuch is comparatively few; and when you compare what you have obſerved of their temper and conduct, I will not ſay with what you read of holy men of old, but with what you have yourſelves ſeen in the faithful, active, and zealous ſervants of CHRIST, in theſe latter ages, with whom you have converſed; do you on the whole find, that the rejecters and deriders of the goſpel, are in other reſpects ſo much more prudent and judicious, ſo much wiſer for themſelves, and for others, that are influenced by them, as that you can be in reaſon obliged to pay any great deference to the authority of a few ſuch names as theſe, in oppoſition to thoſe to whom they are here oppoſed?

But you will ſay, and you will ſay it too truly, Though but a few may venture in words to declare for the neglect of the ſoul and its eternal intereſt, that the greater part of mankind do it in their actions. But are the greater part of mankind ſo wiſe, and ſo good, as implicitly to be followed in matters of the higheſt importance? And do not multitudes of theſe, declare themſelves on the other ſide, in their moſt ſerious moments? When the intoxications of worldly buſineſs and pleaſures are over, and ſome languiſhing ſickneſs forces men to ſolitude and retirement; what have you generally obſerved to be the effect of ſuch a circumſtance? Have they not then declared themſelves convinced of the truth we are now labouring to eſtabliſh? Nay, do we not ſometimes ſee, that a diſtemper which ſeizes the mind with violence, yet does not utterly deſtroy its reaſoning faculties, fixes this conviction on the ſoul in a few hours, nay, ſometimes in a few moments? Have you never ſeen a gay, thoughtleſs creature, ſurprized in the giddy round of pleaſures and amuſements, and preſently brought not only to ſerioufneſs, but terror and trembling, by the near views of death? Have you never ſeen the man of buſineſs and care interrupted, like the rich fool in the parable, in the midſt of his ſchemes for the preſent world? And have you not heard one and the other of them owning the vanity of thoſe pleaſures and cares, which but a few days ago were every thing to them? Confeſſing that religion was the one thing needful, and recommending it to others with an earneſtneſs, as if they hoped thereby to atone for their own former neglect? We that are miniſters, frequently

quently are witneſſes to ſuch things as theſe, and I believe few of our hearers are intire ſtrangers to them.

Once more, what if to the teſtimony of the dying, we could add that of the dead? What if GOD were to turn aſide the vail between us and the inviſible world, and permit the moſt careleſs ſinner in the aſſembly to converſe for a few moments with the inhabitants of it? If you were to apply yourſelf to a happy Spirit, that trod the moſt thorny road to paradiſe, or paſſed through the moſt fiery trial, and to aſk him, "was it worth your while to labour ſo much, and to endure ſo much for what you now poſſeſs?" Surely if the bleſſed in heaven were capable of indignation, it would move them to hear that it ſhould be made a queſtion. And, on the other hand, if you could inquire of one tormented in that flame below, though he might once be "clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare ſumptuouſly every day," *Luke* xvi. 19. if you could aſk him, "whether his former enjoyments were an equivalent for his preſent ſufferings and deſpair?" What anſwer do you ſuppoſe he would return? Perhaps an anſwer of ſo much horror and rage, as you would not be able ſo much as to indure. Or if the malignity of his nature ſhould prevent him from returning any anſwer at all, ſurely there would be a language even in that ſilence, a language in the darkneſs, and flames, and groans of that infernal priſon, which would ſpeak to your very ſoul what the word of GOD is with equal certainty, though leſs forcible conviction, ſpeaking to your ear, that "one thing is needful." You ſee it is ſo in the judgment of GOD the Father, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, of the wiſeſt and beſt of men, of many, who ſeemed to judge moſt differently of it, when they come to more deliberate and ſerious thought, and not only of the dying, but of the dead too, of thoſe who have experimentally known both worlds, and moſt ſurely know what is to be preferred. But I will not reſt the whole argument here; therefore,

2. I appeal to the evident reaſon of the caſe itſelf, as it muſt appear to every unprejudiced mind, that the care of the ſoul is indeed the one thing needful.

I ſtill conſider myſelf as ſpeaking not to atheiſts, or to deiſts, but to thoſe who not only believe the exiſtence and

providence of GOD, and a future ſtate of happineſs and miſery, but likewiſe who credit the truth of the chriſtian revelation, as many undoubtedly do, who live in a fatal neglect of GOD, and their own ſouls. Now on theſe principles, a little reflection may be ſufficient to convince you, that it is needful to the preſent repoſe of your own mind; needful, if ever you would ſecure eternal happineſs, and avoid eternal miſery, which will be aggravated, rather than alleviated by all your preſent enjoyments.

1. The care of the ſoul is the one thing needful, becauſe, "without it you cannot ſecure the peace of your own mind, nor avoid the upbraidings of your conſcience."

That noble faculty is indeed the vicegerent of GOD in the ſoul. It is ſenſible of the dignity and worth of an immortal ſpirit, and will ſometimes cry out of the violence that is offered to it, and cry ſo loud, as to compel the ſinner to hear, whether he will or not. Do you not ſometimes find it yourſelves? when you labour moſt to forget the concerns of your ſoul, do they not ſometimes force themſelves on your remembrance? You are afraid of the reflections of your own mind, but with all your artifice and all your reſolution can you intirely avoid them? Does not conſcience follow you to your beds, even if denied the opportunity of meeting you in your cloſets, and, though with an unwelcome voice, there warn you, "that your ſoul is neglected, and will quickly be loſt:" Does it not follow you to your ſhops and your fields, when you are buſieſt there? Nay, I will add, does it not ſometimes follow you to the feaſt, to the club, to the dance, and perhaps, amidſt all reſiſtance, to the theatre too? Does, it not ſometimes mingle your ſweeteſt draughts with wormwood, and your gayeſt ſcenes with horror? So that you are like a tradeſman, who, ſuſpecting his affairs to be in a bad poſture, lays by his books and his papers, yet ſometimes they will come accidentally in his way. He hardly dares to look abroad for fear of meeting a creditor or an arreſt: and if he labours to forget his cares and his dangers, in a courſe of luxury at home, the remembrance is ſometimes awakened, and the alarm increaſed, by thoſe very extravagancies in which he is attempting to loſe it. Such probably is the caſe of your minds, and it is a very painful ſtate; and while things are thus within, external circumſtances can no more make you

happy,

happy, than a fine dreſs could relieve you under a violent fit of the ſtone. Whereas, if this great affair were ſecured, you might delight in reflection, as much as you now dread it; and conſcience, of your bittereſt enemy, would become a delightful friend, and the teſtimony of it your greateſt rejoicing.

2. The care of the ſoul is the one thing needful, "becauſe "without this your eternal happineſs will be loſt."

A crown of everlaſting glory is not ſurely ſuch a trifle as to be thrown away on a careleſs creature, that will not in good earneſt purſue it. GOD doth not ordinarily deal thus, even with the bounties of his common providence, which are comparatively of little value. As to theſe, the hand of the diligent generally makes rich, and he would be thought diſtracted, rather than prudent, who ſhould expect to get an eſtate merely by wiſhing for it, or without ſome reſolute and continued application to a proper courſe of action for that purpoſe. Now, that we may not fooliſhly dream of obtaining heaven, in the midſt of a courſe of indolence and ſloth, we are expreſly told in the word of GOD, that "the kingdom of heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force," *Matth.* xi. 12. and are therefore exhorted to "ſtrive," with the greateſt intenſeneſs, and eagerneſs of mind, as the word properly ſignifies, "to enter in at the ſtrait gate," for this great and important reaſon, "becauſe many ſhall another day ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able," *Luke* xiii. 24. Nay, when our LORD makes the moſt gracious promiſes to the humble petitioner, he does it in ſuch a manner as to exclude the hopes of thoſe who are careleſs and indifferent. "Aſk, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and you ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you, *Matth.* vii. 7. If, therefore, you do not aſk, ſeek, and knock, the door of mercy will not be opened, and eternal happineſs will be loſt. Not that heaven is to be obtained by our own good works: no, no; for having done all, we muſt account ourſelves unprofitable ſervants.

And ſurely if I could ſay no more as to the fatal conſequences of your neglect, than this, that eternal happineſs will be loſt, I ſhould ſay enough to impreſs every mind, that conſiders what ETERNITY means. To fall into a ſtate of everlaſting forgetfulneſs, might indeed appear a refuge to a mind filled

with the apprehenſion of future miſery. But O how dreadful a refuge is it! Surely it is ſuch a refuge, as a vaſt precipice, (from which a man falling would be daſhed to pieces in a moment) might appear to a perſon, purſued by the officers of juſtice, that he might be brought out to a painful and lingering execution. If an extravagant youth would have reaſon to look round with anguiſh, on ſome fair and ample paternal inheritance, which he had ſold or forfeited merely for the riot of a few days: how much more melancholy would it be for a rational mind to think that its eternal happineſs is loſt for any earthly conſideration whatever? Tormenting thought! "Had I attended to that one thing which I have neglected, I might have been, through the grace of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, great and happy beyond expreſſion, beyond conception: not merely for the little ſpan of ten thouſand thouſand ages, but for ever. A line reaching even to the remoteſt ſtar would not have been able to contain the number of ages, nor would millions of years have been ſufficient to figure them down; this is eternity, but I have loſt it, and am now on the verge of being. This lamp, which might have outlaſted thoſe of the firmament, will preſently be extinguiſhed, and I blotted out from amongſt the works of GOD, and cut off from all the bounties of his hand." Would not this be a very miſerable caſe, if this were all? And would it not be ſufficient to prove this to be the better part, which, as our LORD obſerves, can "never be taken away?" But GOD forbid that we ſhould be ſo unfaithful to him, and to the ſouls of men, as to reſt in ſuch a repreſentation alone. I therefore add once more,

3. The care of the ſoul is the one thing needful, becauſe "without it, you cannot avoid a ſtate of eternal miſery, "which will be aggravated, rather than alleviated by all your "preſent enjoyments."

Nothing can be more evident from the word of the GOD of truth. It there plainly appears to be a determined caſe, which leaves no room for a more favourable conjecture or hope. "The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, even all the nations that forget GOD," *Pſalm* ix. 17. "They ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment, *Matth.* xxv. 46. into a ſtate where they ſhall in vain ſeek death, and death ſhall flee from them. Oh! brethren, it is a certain, but an awful truth, that

that your ſouls will be thinking and immortal beings, even in ſpite of themſelves. They may indeed torment, but they cannot deſtroy themſelves. They can no more ſuſpend their power of thought and perception, than a mirror its property of reflecting rays that fall on its ſurface. Do you ſuſpect the contrary? Make the trial immediately. Command your minds to ceaſe from thinking but for one quarter of an hour, or for half that time, and exclude every idea and every reflection. Can you ſucceed in that attempt? Or rather, does not thought preſs in with a more ſenſible violence on that reſiſtance; as an anxious deſire to ſleep, makes us ſo much the more wakeful. Thus will thought follow you beyond the grave, thus will it, as an unwelcome gueſt, force itſelf upon you, when it can ſerve only to perplex and diſtreſs the mind. It will for ever upbraid you, that notwithſtanding all the kind expoſtulations of GOD and man, notwithſtanding all the keen remonſtrances of conſcience, and the pleadings of the blood of CHRIST, you have gone on in your folly, till heaven is loſt, and damnation incurred; and all, for what? for a ſhadow and a dream.

Oh think not, ſinners, that the remembrance of your paſt pleaſures, and of your ſucceſs in your other cares, whilſt that of the one thing needful was forgotten, think not that this will eaſe your minds. It will rather torment them the more. "Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things." Bitter remembrance! Well might the heathen poets repreſent the unhappy ſpirits in the ſhades below, as eagerly catching at the water of forgetfulneſs, yet unable to reach it. Your preſent comforts will only ſerve to give you a livelier ſenſe of your miſery, as having taſted ſuch degrees of enjoyment; and to inflame the reckoning, as you have miſimproved thoſe talents lodged in your hands for better purpoſes. Surely, if theſe things were believed, and ſeriouſly conſidered, the ſinner would have no more heart to rejoice in his preſent proſperity, than a man would have to amuſe himſelf with the curioſities of a fine garden, through which he was led to be broken upon the rack.

But I will enlarge no farther on theſe things. Would to GOD that the unaccountable ſtupidity of mens minds, and their fatal attachment to the pleaſures and cares of the preſent

life, did not make it neceſſary to inſiſt on them ſo frequently and ſo copiouſly!

I now proceed to the reflections which naturally ariſe from hence, and ſhall only mention two.

1. How much reaſon have we to lament the folly of mankind in neglecting the one thing needful.

If religion be indeed the trueſt wiſdom, then ſurely we have the juſteſt reaſon to ſay with *Solomon*, "that folly and madneſs is in mens hearts," *Eccleſ.* ix. 3. Is it the one thing needful? Look on the conduct of the generality of mankind, and you would imagine they thought it the one thing needleſs: the vaineſt dream, and the idleſt amuſement of the mind. God is admoniſhing them by ordinances, and providences, ſometimes by ſuch as are moſt awful, to lay it to heart;" he ſpeaks once, yea twice, (yea a multitude of times) but man regards not, *Job* xxxiii. 14. They profeſs perhaps to believe all that I have been ſaying, but act as if the contrary were ſelf-evident; they will riſk their ſouls and eternity for a thing of nought, for that, for the ſake of which they would not riſk ſo much as a hand, or a finger, or a joint, no, nor perhaps a toy that adorns it. Surely this is the wonder of angels, and perhaps of devils too, unleſs the obſervation of ſo many ages may have rendered it familiar to both. And can we, my chriſtian brethren, behold ſuch a ſcene with indifference? If ſome epidemical madneſs had ſeized our country, or the places where we live, ſo that as we went from one place to another, we every where met with lunaticks, and ſaw amongſt the reſt, ſome perhaps of the fineſt genius, in the moſt eminent ſtations in life, amuſing themſelves with ſtraws and bubbles, or wounding themſelves and others; ſurely were we ever ſo ſecure from the danger of infection or aſſault, the ſight would cut us to the heart. A good-natured man would hardly be able to go abroad, or even be deſirous to live, if it muſt be amongſt ſo many ſad ſpectacles. Yet theſe poor creatures might, notwithſtanding this, be the children of God, and the higher their frenzy roſe, the nearer might their complete happineſs be. But alas! the greater part of mankind are ſeized with a worſe kind of madneſs, in which they are ruining their ſouls: and can we behold it

with

with indifference? The LORD awaken our compaſſion, our prayers, and our endeavours, in dependence on divine grace, that we may be inſtrumental in bringing them to their mind, and making them wiſe indeed, that is, wiſe to ſalvation!

2. How neceſſary is it that we ſhould ſeriouſly enquire, how this one thing needful is regarded by us!

Let me entreat you to remember your own concern in it, and enquire—Have I thought ſeriouſly of it? Have I ſeen the importance of it? Has it lain with a due and abiding weight on my mind? Has it brought me to CHRIST, that I might lay the ſtreſs of theſe great eternal intereſts on him? And am I acting in the main of my life, as one that has theſe convictions? Am I willing, in fact, to give up other things, my intereſts, my pleaſures, my paſſions to this? Am I converſing with GOD and with man, as one that believes theſe things; as one that has deliberately choſen the better part, and is determined to abide by that choice?

Obſerve the anſwer which conſcience returns to theſe enquiries, and you will know your own part in that more particular application, with which I ſhall conclude.

1. Let me addreſs thoſe that are entirely unconcerned about the one thing needful.

Brethren, I have been ſtating the caſe at large, and now I appeal to your conſciences, are theſe things ſo, or are they not? GOD and your own hearts beſt know for what the care of your ſoul is neglected; but be it what it will, the difference between one grain of ſand and another, is not great, when it comes to be weighed againſt a talent of gold. Whatever it is, you had need to examine it carefully. You had need to view that commodity on all ſides, of which you do in effect ſay, For this will I ſell my ſoul; for this will I give up heaven, and venture hell, be heaven and hell whatever they may. In the name of GOD, brethren, is this the part of a man, of a rational creature? To go on with your eyes open towards a pit of eternal ruin, becauſe there are a few gay flowers in the way: or what if you ſhut your eyes, will that prevent your fall? It ſignifies little to ſay, I will not think of theſe things, I will not conſider them: GOD has ſaid, "In the laſt days they ſhall conſider it perfectly," *Jer.* xxiii. 20. The revels of a drunken malefactor will not prevent nor reſpite his

execution. Pardon my plainneſs; if it were a fable or a tale, I would endeavour to amuſe you with words, but I cannot do it where your ſouls are at ſtake.

2. I would apply to thoſe who are, in ſome ſenſe, convinced of the importance of their ſouls, and yet are inclined to defer that care of them a little longer, which, in the general, they ſee to be neceſſary.

I know you that are young, are under peculiar temptations to do this; though it is ſtrange that the death of ſo many of your companions, ſhould not be an anſwer to ſome of the moſt ſpecious and dangerous of thoſe temptations. Methinks, if there were the leaſt degree of uncertainty, the importance is too weighty to put matters to the venture. But here the uncertainty is great and apparent. You muſt ſurely know, that there are critical ſeaſons of life for managing the concerns of it, which are of ſuch a nature, that if once loſt, they may never return: here is a critical ſeaſon: "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation," 2 *Cor.* vi. 2. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," *Heb.* iii. 7, 8. This language may not be ſpoken to-morrow. Talk not of a more convenient ſeaſon; none can be more convenient; and that to which you would probably refer it, is leaſt of all ſo, a dying time. You would not chuſe then to have any important buſineſs in hand; and will you of choice refer the greateſt buſineſs of all to that languiſhing, hurrying, amazing hour? If a friend were then to come to you with the balance of an intricate account, or a view of a title to an eſtate, you would ſhake your fainting head, and lift up your pale trembling hand, and ſay, perhaps, with a feeble voice, "Alas, is this a time for theſe things?" And is it a time for ſo much greater things than theſe? I wiſh you knew, and would conſider, into what a ſtrait, we that are miniſters are ſometimes brought, when we are called to the dying beds of thoſe who have ſpent their lives in the neglect of the one thing needful. On the one hand, we fear, leſt if we palliate matters, and ſpeak ſmooth things, we ſhall betray and ruin their ſouls: and on the other, that if we uſe a becoming plainneſs and ſerioufneſs, in warning them of their danger, we ſhall quite overwhelm them, and haſten the dying moment, which is advancing by ſuch ſwift ſteps. O let me entreat you for our ſakes, and much

much more for your own, that you do not drive us to ſuch ſad extremities; but if you are convinced, as I hope ſome of you may now be, that the care of the ſoul is that needful thing we have repreſented, let the conviction work, let it drive you immediately to the throne of grace; from thence you may derive that wiſdom and ſtrength, which will direct you in all the intricacies which entangle you, and animate you in the midſt of difficulty and diſcouragement.

3. I would in the laſt place addreſs myſelf to thoſe happy ſouls, who have in good earneſt attended to the one thing needful.

I hope, that when you ſee how commonly it is neglected, neglected indeed, by many, whoſe natural capacities, improvements, and circumſtances in life, appear to you ſuperior to your own; you will humbly acknowledge, that it was diſtinguiſhing grace which brought you into this happy ſtate, and formed you to this moſt neceſſary care. Bleſs the LORD, therefore, who hath given you that counſel, in virtue of which you can ſay, "He is your portion." Rejoice in the thought, that the great concern is ſecured: as it is natural for us to do, when ſome important affair is diſpatched, which has long lain before us, and which we have been inclined to put off from one day to another, but have at length ſtrenuouſly and ſucceſsfully attended. Remember ſtill to endeavour to continue acting on theſe great principles, which at firſt determined your choice; and ſeriouſly conſider, that thoſe who deſire their life may at laſt be given them for a prey, muſt continue on their guard, in all ſtages of their journey through a wilderneſs, where daily dangers are ſtill ſurrounding them. Being enabled to ſecure the great concern, make yourſelves eaſy as to others of ſmaller importance: You have choſen the kingdom of GOD, and his righteouſneſs; other things, therefore, ſhall be added unto you: and if any which you deſire ſhould, not be added, comfort yourſelves with this thought, that you have the good part, which can never be taken away. And, not to enlarge on theſe obvious hints, which muſt ſo often occur, be very ſolicitous that others may be brought to a care about the one thing needful. If it be needful for you, it is ſo for your children, your friends, your ſervants. Let them, therefore, ſee your concern in this reſpect for them, as well as for your-

ſelves. Let parents eſpecially attend to this exhortation; whoſe care for their offspring often exceeds in other reſpects, and fails in this. Remember that your children may never live to enjoy the effects of your labour and concern to get them eſtates and portions: the charges of their funerals may, perhaps, be all their ſhare of what you are ſo anxiouſly careful to lay up for them. And O think what a ſword would pierce through your very heart, if you ſhould ſtand by the corpſe of a beloved child with this reflection: "This poor creature has done with life, before it learnt its great buſineſs in it; and is gone to eternity, which I have ſeldom been warning it to prepare for, and which, perhaps, it learned of me to forget."

On the whole, may this grand care be awakened in th by whom it has been hitherto neglected: may it be revive each of our minds. And that you may be encouraged purſue it with greater chearfulneſs, let me conclude with t comfortable thought, that in proportion to the neceſſity the caſe, through the merits of CHRIST JESUS, is the proviſi which divine grace has made for our aſſiſtance. If you a diſpoſed to ſit down at CHRIST's feet, he will teach you t his word and Spirit. If you commit this precious jewe which is your eternal all, into his hand, he will preſerve i unto that day, and will then produce it richly adorned, an glorioufly improved to his own honour, and to your everlaſting joy.

Which GOD of his infinite mercy grant, &c.

END of the FIFTH VOLUME.

a 93.

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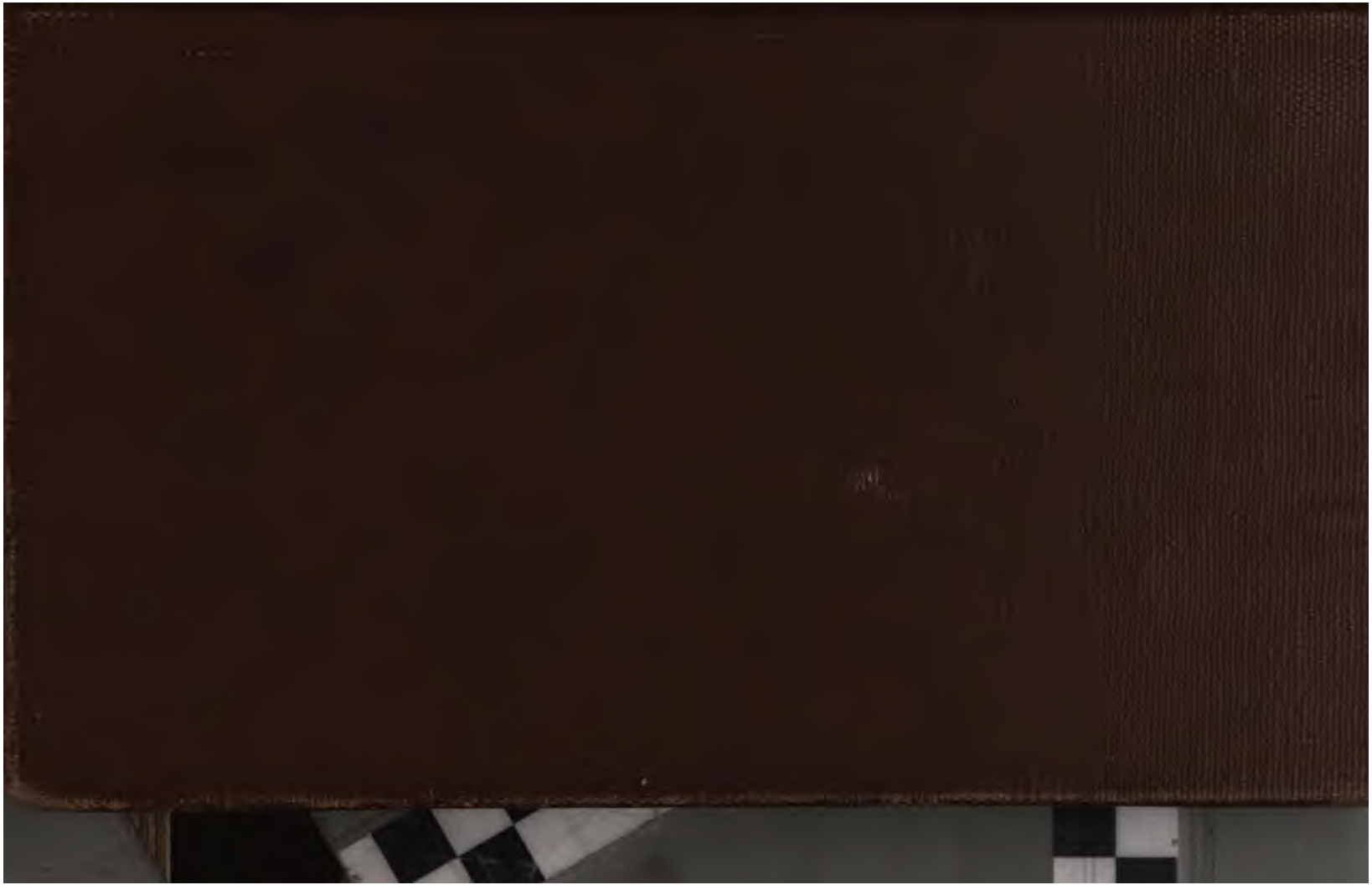
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